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BY

MARGARET SHERWOOD

AUTHOR OF "AN EXPERIMENT IN ALTRUISM" AND "A PURITAN BOHEMIA"

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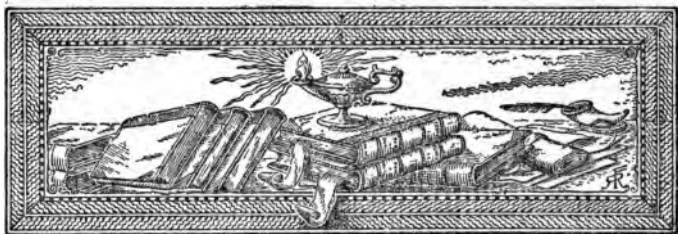
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HENRY WORTHINGTON

CHAPTER I



HE young professor walked swiftly down the corridor and unlocked the door of Lecture Room A. A stream of students was pouring down the staircase at the left. A group near by, standing with books under their arms, and their hands in their pockets, eyed with good-humoured curiosity the new instructor as he fumbled nervously at the lock. Inside the room he drew a sigh of relief. He threw open a window, and began to pace the floor, in the narrow passageway between the rows of desks.

The second bell would ring in five minutes. Then those eager-faced boys would come in, singly, or in twos and threes, with their stylographic pens and their note-books. Those note-books were the worst feature of all. He had nothing to say, nothing. Every idea had left him. He could think only of the line : —

“The hungry sheep look up and are not fed.”

He paused, one foot on the platform, vainly chasing back *in his memory* a rapidly fleeing phantom of his first sentence.

"Gentlemen," it began, "gentlemen, we —"

"We" what?

It was not thus that he had dreamed in bygone days of his first class. Even while wearing knickerbockers he had become aware of an inherited sense of responsibility toward the world, and had looked out upon life with great seriousness. As a child he had walked up and down the campus among the tall students, thinking of the day when he should be a professor.

"What are you going to do when you get to be a man, Henry?" a senior had asked him one day.

"Teach you, sir," the boy answered.

"Worthington's babe" became a favourite with the class.

On another occasion he had been discovered working with his father's microscope, one valuable slide crushed in his small fat hand. The explanation of his conduct had come with a burst of tears.

"I thought," he wailed, one arm held across his eyes to protect him from the disapproval in his father's face, "that if you died I'd have to teach your classes."

A professorship was hereditary in the Worthington family. The young man's father, grandfather, great-grandfather, had sat in chairs before him. Divinity had been the province of the last, philosophy of the grandfather; the father was still professor of biology — four of them in a row, like stepping-stones in human thought.

"Gentlemen, we —"

Henry Worthington, Ph. D. at Vienna, newly made associate professor of economics at Winthrop University, took out his handkerchief and mopped the perspiration of sheer fright from his forehead. It had remained for him to disgrace his traditions. His stripling dreams of swaying men had come to this! He sank down upon one of the seats in the front row with a groan.

He was a strongly built young man, of twenty-six or seven, with a profile that looked as if it had been patterned after some Roman coin. The muscles of neck and

shoulders bore witness to athletic training. His face wore an expression of obstinate firmness, not unmixed with sweetness. There was a fresh air of youth and innocence about him, and the look in his dark gray eyes denoted a reserve of fun down under his shyness.

Why "we"? he said to himself. What connection was there between him and these lads? He was a student, a recluse, interested in books, in ideas, not in people. Why had he ever accepted the appointment? He could have lived in decent penury, without his salary, on the money his mother had left him. This lecturing was going to interfere with his creative work. It was going to jar on his nerves horribly.

Then, in swift contradiction, the hope and the aspiration of the last three years rushed upon him. A minute brought him, as crucial minutes will, the thought and the feeling of whole months of life. Here, here was the opportunity for which he had toiled and waited. This was the focus of all his years of thinking existence, and the time for the unsealing of his lips had come. He lifted his eyes and caught sight of a flag, relic of the Spanish-American war, draped high on the wall over one of the blackboards. It brought to him a realizing sense of the task he had to do. He remembered the day when the sight of that flag, floating over a consulate on alien shores, had given him a sudden faintness, a throb of pleasure that was pain. It was like the quick touch of a lover's hand. To him it had revealed an undiscovered passion, and all day long his feet had beaten time to —

"O beautiful, my country!"

The moment had given point to a student's love of mental activity for the mere pleasure of the activity, and his work henceforth moulded itself to an idea of special service to that young country whose early history had been a prayer.

A constant reproach against her had been on the lips of the people about him. America, said his young German

and Austrian friends, represented a purely mercenary civilization, whose root was greed. She had sold her soul for the dollar. To the young man, who had known only the colonial traditions of his country, the criticism was as exasperating as it was incomprehensible. To him she seemed a land of loftier ideals than the old world knew, ideals of freedom, equality, justice. He had walked all his life in the shadow of the Pilgrim fathers, unconscious that that shadow is too short to reach from end to end of this great territory. Henry had grown morbidly sensitive in his patriotism, and once, after a heated debate, had almost challenged young Herr Ruprechtsstoettner to a duel, on the ground of insult to the American flag.

The criticism had made the tide of his thought set all one way. The principles for which his country stood presented themselves constantly in sharp antithesis to the social and industrial abuses of which she was accused. The purely theoretic aspects of his study ceased, for the time, to appeal to him, and his thesis on the *History of the Theory of Value* suffered. He applied himself to the study of concrete problems: investigation of the methods by which huge fortunes are made, and, on the other hand, study of socialistic experiment and scheme that seemed to offer a practical answer to the question that America had tried — in vain, these people said — to answer for the world. The fierce homesickness that assailed him now and then intensified his interest in the merely human side of economic investigation. The thought of passionate service possessed him. Mere student and thinker, he said to himself, he could find no place among men of action. He must stand at one side, with his books, and watch the slow drifting away from earlier and nobler standards of national honour. He had clenched his hands at the thought of his uselessness as he paced the streets of foreign cities, until one moment's sudden insight had pointed out his path.

He was to be a teacher of young men. It was for him to help them learn to think. To set high the standard;

to help create, even in one university, civic ideals of righteousness; to urge in economic matters a justice that did not mean simply obedience to the letter of the law, but generosity in the ordinary transactions of life — surely this was a practical aim. The country was safe. Its new war, that war in which chivalry and lust for power had blended so strangely, was over. It was for other service that the flag called now. The crises of to-day were industrial crises. To help root out even one syllable of wrong thought was an opportunity as glorious as death on the field of battle. The task was great; his arm was feeble, but it was ready.

The sail into the smooth harbour, at the end of the long return voyage, had brought to the young man a suggestion of the peace of a final coming home. White sails and shore and water and the encompassing arms of land were touched by sunset light. He leaned over the railing, content. The air was purer here than elsewhere. America, with all her mistakes, was cleaner yet than other lands. In that old world, which he had left so gladly, the very sky seemed touched with the memory of old sins, the faces of men and of women scarred with them. That flag on the mast stood for newer and fairer ideas of the rights of man. It was for the sons of America to wipe out this new stain on the stars and stripes. To teach the world a finer sense of justice than it yet had known; to prove that the law of courtesy and kindness can be carried into the business of the great commercial world: this was the mission of the young pioneer whose promise to her sons of liberty and equality had hardly been fulfilled. To the young idealist, whose eyes were dim with the joy of coming home, all good things seemed possible.

Henry roused himself with a start from his reverie, and took out his watch. Three of the five minutes were gone. They had seemed a lifetime. He could not summon now the inspiration of those days in Vienna. He had meant to be a power; he had meant to be the friend and comrade

of his students, but that was long ago, before this creeping terror had ruined his life. He rose and walked to the window, while a vision of what was coming passed before his eyes: the students in rows, smiling, nudging one another, while he stood pale and speechless behind the desk.

"No man," he muttered to himself, "has a right to take a platform attitude before his fellows. Arrogance like that should be punished by the gods with swift confusion. The confusion has come!"

Outside the window stretched the common, with its passing people, and the crawling electric cars beyond. Henry remembered that he used to sit near this window in Philosophy IX and make pictures of old Professor Sloane, who was now dead and gathered unto his fellow-philosophers.

Time had avenged Professor Sloane!

"And it's good enough for me," said Henry, grinding his teeth. "I've got to expiate my past by inches."

He heard voices in the corridor. Was there no way of escape out of the window? That tree a few yards distant he used to climb when he was a little fellow. He remembered the first time he had done it, his father, a trifle pale, urging him on. The tree was beyond his reach now.—His dear old father! The coming disaster would be hard for him. The motive of all the boy's life had been to do something of which that father could be proud. He had been greatly pleased with his son's appointment.

"Henry," he had said, "for a man of twenty-six to receive an honour like this from his *alma mater*, before he has taught a day, is unusual. You are worthy of your grandfather and your great-grandfather. I wish your mother could see you now."

That was the third time in Henry's whole life that his father had spoken of the boy's mother.

"Before I had taught a day!" he groaned. "If I had taught a day they wouldn't have given me the chair."

He wished that his mother were here. He had never known her. Often, when he was little, he had wondered what it would be like to touch her dress, and he felt like that now. That curious new loneliness of spirit which had come upon him in his wanderings, and which the old things did not satisfy, was strong upon him now.

The bell rang, sharp, vindictive. The door was flung open. There was a queer feeling in Henry's knees. They seemed perfectly willing to bend either way, and he felt that he had nothing trustworthy to stand on. Pulses were beating in parts of him where they ought not to be. He was dizzy. Benches, blackboards, the maps on the walls, swam before his eyes, and the desk apparently slipped away, receding as he approached. Surely he was not going to faint! That was a disgusting thing for a man to do. He had done it once, four or five years ago, when he was quite young. It had felt like this.

Meanwhile the young professor mounted the platform without a touch of embarrassment. He found himself bowing to the students as they entered. He smiled at the slender boy in blue. That was Allan Hayes. He wondered if the student with the shaggy crop of hair was depending on that, Samson-wise, to conquer learning by brute force. There were brown heads, yellow heads, black heads. Thirty-five pairs of eyes were fixed upon him. He stood behind his desk, one hand resting on John Stuart Mill's *Political Economy*. He was conscious of one thing and only one: an overpowering desire to touch in mind and soul these young men before him, to waken them to vital issues, to make them aware, not only of the scientific aspects of their subject, but of its bearings on actual existence.

"Gentlemen," he said, "we have a year's work to do together. I am not going to teach you a dead set of formulæ. I have no body of doctrine to impose upon you. We shall study, investigate, learn the meanings of

some things, side by side. Possibly the older scholarship was based too much on the idea that certain things have been settled forever, and are to be learned as dogma. In our new conception, to each humblest student is given the responsibility of an investigator. He must test, examine, sift for himself. There is no cast-iron system for him to acquire. Scholarship means the charm of pursuit. It is all change, process, growth, and the truth we are trying to apprehend is not petrified, but is constantly flying ahead of us, like music —”

The voice was firm, sweet, steady. Enthusiasm vibrated in it, aspiration, faith. Voice and words touched the class with electric power. The boys cheered. That was embarrassing. He began again, rather awkwardly. Did the class see his hands trembling? He was suddenly aware of the outline and colour of every face before him. What was he saying? The exhortation about the spirit of the work had given way to the outlining of a definite task. Pages twenty to seventy-five were to be read, discussed, criticised. Something had settled down like an extinguisher over the sense of power of a moment before. Not even the answering gleam in the eyes of the sensitive-faced lame boy in the front row could console him. He went on talking, quietly and very earnestly.

He heard a step outside the class-room door. That quick, steady footfall! It was the most familiar sound in the world to him. He had heard it beside his crib. It had echoed in all the days of his life except those winters of study abroad. How he had longed for it then!

“Father,” said the young man under his breath, and he bit his lips. They were thin, sensitive lips like his father’s, and he bit them in the same way. Would he ever rise, he wondered, to the height of that guardianship?

The students dashed out of the room when he was done with them, each swinging his cap to his head as his foot touched the threshold. Henry looked after them, with the expression of one shepherding a flock. Then he

picked up two books and started away. His father was waiting outside the door.

"I had to come over to see Carter," said the older man, apologetically. "How was it?" he added, looking anxiously into his son's face.

"Not bad. Going home? I'll come too."

They walked away in silence, side by side. There was a curious likeness between the two: the same clear gray eyes, the same firm lips, the same bold outlines of forehead and chin. The father's hair was touched with gray, but the clean-shaven face looked, at times, almost as young as the thoughtful face of the boy.

Alfred Worthington would have been ashamed to confess the agitation that had drawn him from his laboratory to pace the corridor in front of Room A where his son's first trial was going on. When they were halfway home he turned and said:—

"Hungry?"

"Yes," answered Henry, "ravenous."

They had lived together, thought together, felt together ever since Henry had begun to think and feel. In the tingling sympathy between father and son the dividing lines of personality seemed to have disappeared. When the son was moved, the father's pulses beat faster. They had so little need of words in their intercourse that they had almost forgotten how to converse with each other.

As they walked down Wiclif Street their quick steps gave to most of the passers on the sidewalk a shambling and undecided gait. Turning at the right, they entered a passage marked Lancaster Place. It was like stepping into a different country, as the noises of the street gave way to silence, with a hum of distant traffic. A beech tree, with haunting suggestions of summer woods, guarded the entrance. The great colonial houses surrounding the square lent the place an old-world look. On some of them faint traces of lack of repair were visible, where

paint was cracking on the tall white pillars, or a loosened board started away from its place. Pale green moss rippled in waves of colour over the trunks of the trees, the brick pavement, the stone fences bordering greener lawns. There was an air of incipient decay in Lancaster Place. It bore the impress of a refined, hospitable, generous life, passing now into a serene old age.

Professor Worthington and his son walked through a high stone gateway, whose posts were crowned by great balls of stone. Against the blue of the sky stood out the long, unbroken lines of the house, and the dull red of the huge chimneys. A tall hemlock tree guarded the front entrance on the east. On the south and west lay the garden, full of old-fashioned things, hollyhocks, snow-ball trees, spice shrubs, cinnamon rose-bushes, guarded by box borders. Up and down the garden paths a peculiar figure was strolling. It was a man of perhaps fifty, dressed in a worn-out suit of brown and a shabby straw hat, a man with narrow shoulders, slightly bent, and the thinnest ankles that human being ever had. He had Dante's profile, grim and bold, with Dante's lean and hungry look, and bright, sharp eyes.

"Good morning, Alfred," he said, still holding between his teeth a dilapidated pipe he was smoking.

It was Benedict Warren, sole representative of the oldest family in town, and owner of the great estate on Warren Street. He was a bachelor, with a love for books, a dislike of people, a passion for his pipe, and a sense of deep companionship with his dog. He was also a fisherman, and—at least so said the people who saw him go fishing on Sunday—an atheist. He was Alfred Worthington's dearest friend.

The professor pushed his son toward this apparition.

"Henry has lived through his first day," he remarked.

The visitor took his pipe from his mouth and smiled. It was a singularly winning smile, despite the stubble of beard that disfigured his Dantesque jaw.

"Leave anything to teach 'em next time?" he asked. "You young ones usually want to do it all at once."

"I didn't teach them much," said Henry with a smile. "I just—"

"You just," interrupted Warren, "told them that you hadn't anything to say, but that the subject is there, and they are at liberty to find out what they want to for themselves. That's the way they do it now. A man can draw anywhere from two to ten thousand dollars a year by saying that over and over. When I was young, teachers used to know something themselves."

He put his pipe back into his mouth.

"Come in," said Alfred Worthington.

The visitor shook his head in silence.

"Got some news for you," he announced presently, with an expression which he could not prevent from being a grin of delight.

His friend waited.

"Gordon's going to give five hundred thousand dollars to the university, your department. Told me so himself. Met him at the bank."

"Five hundred thousand dollars," said Alfred Worthington, slowly.

The guest nodded. The professor's eyes shone, and he looked at Henry. His expression was repeated in the boy's face.

The smile of satisfaction that marks the discovery of a way to have one's cake and eat it too spread over Alfred Worthington's face. For years he had been hampered in his work of research, and his passion for science had chafed under the restraints imposed upon it by a badly endowed department. Science was poor at Winthrop; divinity and polite letters rich. Yet the professor had stubbornly refused tempting offers from the West, where, in brand-new universities, money gained by patent medicines flowed freely. He loved his city. He revered her simple traditions. His family history was here. His wife's grave was in the

cemetery. In the clash between love of science and love of the place the science had suffered.

He grasped his old friend's hand, and wrung it, speechless. Warren was embarrassed by the satisfaction that he felt gleaming in his own face.

"I've got to go home," he said, "and dig bait."

Without another word he disappeared. His huge mastiff, Ulysses, rose ponderously from the ground and followed his master through the stone gateway. Father and son stood still to watch the two figures strolling away in the sunshine.

"I should think," said Henry, eying with displeasure a little stream of water that ran trickling through the gutter in the street, "that Winthrop might have outgrown before this the system of surface-drainage."

The glow died out of the professor's face. He turned toward his son with the dubious expression of one wavering between a reproof and a joke.

"Your ancestors found Winthrop a fit place to live in, Henry," he observed. "I have no doubt that it is worthy of you also."



CHAPTER II

“La faccia sua era faccia d’uom giusto,
Tanto benigna avea di fuor la pelle.”



NNICE GORDON was swinging in her hammock at one corner of the verandah. It was an October day, and the air was warm. Part of the time she watched the sunlight on the marshes east of the bluff where the great house stood. Part of the time she scrutinized her father’s face, and the colour in her gray-brown eyes, with their flecks of green, changed as she did so, the pupils expanding and growing small again. At each step in her process of thought she touched the floor with her foot and gave herself a little push. She was wondering what she could find to talk about when her father dropped his newspaper. It was all new and embarrassing, and her red under lip quivered wistfully. She was a stranger in her father’s house, and very homesick, not for the school she had left, but for some undiscovered place that would make her want to stay.

Mr. Gordon finished the seventh page of his paper for the fourth time, and turned back to the first, which he had read twice before. The large sheets seemed to offer him protection in the face of this new presence in his house.

Annice had gone away a child of thirteen. In her vacations he had seen her usually in the presence of other people. What was he going to do with this tall, reserved, beautiful young woman, whose long skirts rustled on the piazza floor. What was she thinking of him? Did she appreciate all he had done for her? Did she realize all that filial gratitude ought to offer for benefits so great? The face that he saw in his furtive glances over his newspaper, showed, at the corners of the mouth, graven lines of character, betokening a nature not at the mercy of circumstances, but thoughtful and able to resist. Not that Mr. Gordon saw the lines. To him every human being was a child up to the time of becoming a parent, when blind obedience was changed for rule. His general notion of the present relationship was summed up in the words, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord," yet he felt keenly the need of more minute directions in dealing with this changeable being, who looked at him with serious eyes, but whose laugh, in distant portions of the house, had a sound of joy incarnate. Was she afraid of him? The thought both pained and gratified him. He yearned for liking and approval, but the respect due a father must also be his.

There was a look of energy about Mr. Gordon. The tall, thin, broad-shouldered frame seemed too important for the chair in which he was sitting. He had a determined jaw, and sharp eyes, shaded by grizzled eyebrows. The face wore a kind of mask, the gray hair and beard lending it a look of benevolence. The self-congratulation of the successful merchant was there. There was in it, too, a kind of self-consciousness, as if its owner, standing off and looking on, had a continual appreciation of Samuel Gordon in his several offices of father, merchant, and pillar of society. He expected much of himself, saw himself large, grasping only the ideal aspects of his actions — and he always had his clothes made too big for him.

The girl in the hammock looked past him and the collie

sleeping at his feet, out to where the October sunshine touched the sea. The old, haunting fear that beauty must be wrong came back, intensified by her present thought, and something glistened suspiciously on her long eyelashes. Her path lay straight ahead. She could see it to the very end of the long years. Whatever happened, she would do her duty. The time she had half dreaded, half longed for, during her school years, had arrived at last. She had come home to stay. A passion for self-sacrifice belonged to all the women of the Gordon family, and life had humoured most of them in the matter of gratifying it, as it was doing now with Annice. Perhaps it was the vision of blue water through this mist in her eyes that brought a sudden breathless sense of wide spaces and far horizons cut off by this narrow path where she must walk.

It was self-sacrifice, she confessed to herself. She did not understand her father. Always in their relations something had jarred. A wave of penitence for childish wrongdoing swept over her. It was her fault; it always had been her fault. Looking now at the stern face with its shadow of gray hair, she thought she detected in it a capacity for suffering of which she had never been aware. The thought of pain always turned her into one quivering nerve of sympathy, for she had an instinctive fore-knowledge of the path she had not travelled.

"You may dipend upon it," Mrs. Grady, the washer-woman, had once said after the death of her son, "that Miss Annice has had a great sorrow. Maybe wan of thim furrin masters in school got her heart away from her, or whativer, but she knows, she does. Thim that's been there understands."

The sparkle had died out of Annice's face. She was nerving herself to her great resolve. Here there was no instinct to guide her, and she groped her way slowly among the commandments to find the right. Sternly, unrelentingly she would devote herself to her father always. Picturing the future, she saw herself becoming thinner and

thinner, the servant of her own iron will, growing old without having lived. A tear trickled down her pretty nose as, with the hungry asceticism of youth, she luxuriated in the thought of her denial of self. She was of Scotch-Puritan descent, and her conscience was the only theatre she had ever had. If a touch of melodrama mingled with the action pictured there, her passionate desire to find out and do the right was none the less real.

In her sudden emotion she said to herself that the old feeling, half fear, half disapproval, with which she had regarded her father had never had any basis. She had misunderstood and had been unreasonable, always. Now, in atonement, she would make his home a paradise for him. She would even get up at this minute, go over to him, and kiss him. There was a queer little thrill in her knees as she said this. Looking shyly at him, she caught one of his stolen glances toward her, and she sank back in the hammock with the motion of a wild animal trying to hide, for those shrewd gray eyes disconcerted her. No, she could never kiss him that way, when he did not expect it. The orthodox kiss at night he demanded as his due. This would only startle him, and he might demand an explanation. Perhaps it was foolish to do any but practical things. Through the meshes in her hammock she saw, curling round on her father's black coat, a long white thread, and she wished she dared take it away. The housewife's instinct stirred in the girl whose mother and grandmother and great-grandmother had proved their love by darning stockings and mending clothes. At any rate, she could make the house beautiful. She rose and tiptoed softly away to the great parlour, entering through one of the windows cut low to the piazza floor. Her father's eyes followed her as she went. Her motions startled him. Spite of the fashionable gown, he saw the figure of his mother, the serious-eyed Scotchwoman, who had carried the milking stool and called home the cows on a little up-country farm. There was the same quick energy of step, that movement as if the world were too full

of things to do. And Annice had gone away without speaking to him. She had spent an hour and a half on the piazza—he took out his watch to see—and had said no word to her father. A look of injury settled down upon Mr. Gordon's face. He patted the collie. Jock growled. He was a dog of many moods, and to-day he did not wish to be disturbed. His master felt that growl, and he settled back in his chair with the wrinkles deepened between his eyebrows. Unappreciated! Misunderstood! It had always been that way.

Annice stood in the centre of the parlour, dismayed. Make this beautiful? Only a fire could undo its present hideousness enough for that. Everything in the room was huge. Great cabbage roses disfigured the carpet. The girl remembered how her mother had begged for a quieter pattern and had been overruled. To Mr. Gordon there was but one right way in things, and that way was his. He had selected chairs and sofa, the largest that could be had for money, covered with the deepest plush. A marble-topped table, tombstone always over the grave of beauty, occupied the centre of the room. Everything had an air of being new. The Gordon palace had been built and furnished only twelve years, and these products of sudden wealth refused to look as if they belonged together.

The apartment was a colossal reproduction of the best room in the tiny farmhouse where Samuel Gordon had been born. Few of the original articles of furniture had been preserved, but choice in the new had been dominated by the taste of the old. What had been dignified there by poverty was vulgar in its ostentation here. In the expensive mirror, the huge piano, the gilded ceiling, was the merchant's revenge on fate, his triumph over those early days of chopping wood and doing "the chores." Mr. Gordon liked to have about him anything that had been associated with himself at any time. To find suggestions of his early life was always pleasant. On a shelf in his own room stood a box containing a top and some marbles he had

once played with, and he still owned a tiny account-book bearing a record of the time when he had bought a ten-cent fishing-pole for five cents. A portrait of himself as a lank, hard-featured youth of twenty-four, hung there in the parlour in a little group of family pictures, whose tarnished oval frames had a look of not being at home in their present surroundings.

Annice paced the floor. She hated the crude colours, the sharp edges, the shop-made look of the place. The lack of any sense of fineness of visible things gave her a feeling that was like physical pain. She wanted curves and soft shades that melted one into another, beauty and grace and harmony. The portraits on the walls, faded and dim as they were in their battered frames, were as repellent as the rest. There was her grandfather's face, stern in its iron piety. There was her great-grandmother's, calm and sure. To them the ultimate convictions of Calvinism had been terribly real, and they had ruled their lives in scrupulous uprightness whose root was fear. Obedience to a law as strict as that of the Jews had led to action, now sublime, now grotesque. The girl smiled as she glanced at her grandfather's face. He had had a bitter quarrel with his oldest son because the young man had insisted on looking at an eclipse of the moon on Sunday night.

"You've no right to do your own pleasure on my holy day," insisted the old man.

"If it is a sin to look at it, why should it happen on the Sabbath?" asked the son.

"The Lord's ways are wonderful, and past finding out," was the reply. "Go to your catechism. There you will find a rule of life."

But the stubborn faith of early days had resulted in much besides the keeping of the letter of the law. One of Samuel Gordon's remote ancestors had been martyred in the days of Claverhouse, and had undergone long torture without a change of expression, so thoroughly was his soul

armed against all that man could do. The girl in the parlour shivered as she thought of the story. The strength of these faces she admired. Their sternness antagonized her.

"I shall never have the family expression," she said to herself.

The faith inwrought with these lives seemed cruel to her just now. Religion like that was only another hard thing in a world hard enough without it, full as it was of sorrow and misunderstanding. She turned to her mother's picture, and a single glance filled her eyes with tears. The patient sweetness of that face seemed out of place in the aggressive righteousness of the Gordon family.

"She would want me to stay and do it," said Annice, with a little sob, "but there are so many long years."

Into the girl's face, full of its hunger for life and love and reality, the look of finished discipline in the pictured countenance brought an expression akin to itself. Annice was the child of her mother's suffering, and an inherited look of grief, strong sometimes, and sometimes faint, sat oddly on the face as yet unhurt and untried, bespeaking an experience not her own. Her childhood had been passed in shadow, close to her mother's side. When that lingering illness had ended, the motherless child of thirteen already knew the lesson that years are sure to teach, that the one great demand in life is for sympathy — something to touch the inner hurt in things.

Standing there, half in shadow, half in sunshine, with the light falling on her pale brown hair, hair soft, yet wilful, and determined not to keep its smooth part, the girl looked like a waif, a changeling. Her slenderness emphasized the massiveness of her surroundings. A touch of quaintness, an old-fashioned look, contradicted always the clothes they had made her wear, and the setting they had given her.

"Mademoiselle Annice is a Puritaine," the French master at Madame Von Holst's had said. "I can see it in the way her hair is planted on her forehead."

For her costly clothes and her unlimited allowance the girl had cared little, as money could not buy her what she wished in life. The great sacrifice, the great devotion — that was the hope that had haunted her dreams. Here it was ready for her; the finding it brought only a sense of disappointment, and of loss. She had asked for something harder.

She turned and saw, with a start, that her father was looking at her. How long had he been there? She coloured and was dumb. He did not notice the working of her face, for he was looking past her toward the family pictures.

"There's nothing that tells," he observed with pride, "like character. 'I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.' In this world, to say nothing of the world to come, only energy, honesty, industry will succeed."

There was a touch of the declamatory in his voice. He stepped nearer Annice, who looked at him apprehensively. Now was the time to outline the future for her.

"My daughter," he observed, "now that you have come home to stay, I want to give you just a word of advice. 'Let your light so shine.' I want you to take in Winthrop the position that my means enable you to take. I should like to see you active both in club and in church work. Your work here will determine largely your social status. I want you of course in everything to do as you wish. You have all your time, and perfect freedom."

The passionate faith of Samuel Gordon's ancestors had become a matter of petrified conviction with him. Curiously unreal, unvital was the belief he supposed himself to hold. The energy of his life had gone into business. For the rest, he had taken his righteousness for granted, with perfunctory observance of the outward rites of a belief that had been to his forbears as live coals upon the altar. His remarks grated on the girl.

"I don't think that it would be right," she said, looking at him with clear, wide-opened eyes, "to undertake church work for position. And I don't care about position. I should like to find something to do for people who suffer, something real and alive."

Her father's face darkened. He was not the first person who had been startled by the unexpected honesty and frankness of the girl. A German lady who had once appealed to Annice with, "Do you think me so very ugly to look at?" had been staggered by the girl's plain "Yes." Mr. Gordon had been gazing down at his daughter, thinking how docile she looked. There was something appealing about her, that made every woman want to pet her, every man want to take care of her and manage her. Her remarks now, as often, had in them an electric shock that belied the gentle face.

"Not want to do church work?" Mr. Gordon repeated.

"No," said the girl, resolutely. "You said that I was to choose, to decide, did you not?"

Life for Mr. Gordon had been a long attempt to combine having his own way with the maintaining of the traditional family virtue, unselfishness. His own way he certainly had had. The virtue had appeared chiefly in admonition to others, and in certain complacently remembered acts of spectacular self-denial. The method of escape which he took from the dilemma was one he had often used, and his lips settled into their usual little iron curl of benevolence.

"You are at liberty to choose the right, my daughter," he announced, "not the wrong. Of that you are perhaps too young to be the judge. Of course you will enter upon church work. If you want to take up the poor, nothing could be better. I am visitor in District A. My duties leave me little time, and it will be an excellent opening for you. Now run away and order supper early, at six. I must go to Chicago on the 7.15 train."

An hour later, at supper, sitting behind a huge silver

teapot, Gothic in structure, Annice talked very fast. She was entertaining her father! She was making home happy! She did it well, with her eager manner, her flashes of silence, her apparent intensity of interest in what she was saying. She talked about her summer at Mount Desert and in the White Mountains with her aunt. Mr. Gordon was pleased, for he liked vivacity, and Annice had never shown so little constraint. Once when his daughter interrupted him, his face clouded, and he made a suggestive remark about the attitude of Youth toward Age. Samuel Gordon was fond of abstract names with capitals.

"I beg your pardon," said Annice, smiling at him from behind the teapot. "My manners are bad. They ought to have made me better ones at so expensive an establishment, but I am afraid there is something about me that a finishing school can't finish. You see, I'm not civilized. I'm half wild yet. I suppose it's because my ancestry lived out of doors in fields and woods."

The look of irritation that Annice was beginning to know settled upon her father's face.

"I don't see why you have so little respect for my family," he said fretfully. "Your ancestors were worthy people, though poor," he added, glancing with a certain complacency at the showy linen and ostentatious silver.

"Cousin Alec is awfully interesting now," said Annice, going back to the summer in haste. "He goes in for sociology, as he puts it, and he's all waked up, alive. I used to think that he was stupid. He's been investigating New York. He knows all about slums and sweater-shops and immoralities. He's specializing on shops."

Mr. Gordon looked up for further information.

"Places like Horton's there and Mott's in Chicago and Smith's here —"

Her father winced.

"I thought you'd find it interesting," said the girl, with self-congratulation. "I told Cousin Alec he ought to come and talk with you, because you know how things ought to

be done. The thing I mean is the big, cheap department-store where they advertise great bargains that aren't there at all, and maltreat their clerks, and underpay their women — ”

She beckoned to the maid to give her the newspaper that her father had laid upon the table.

“Here,” said Annice, reading from the advertising columns. “This is what I mean.”

“SMITH’S!

“CLOAKS WORTH \$50.00 GOING AT \$9.50.

“HOSE WORTH 45¢ AT 9½¢.

“TO-DAY, PACKAGE OF CANDY GIVEN AWAY WITH EACH PURCHASE AMOUNTING TO \$5.00.

“OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME.

“COME AND SEE!”

“That’s the kind of a place,” she added, folding up the paper, “where they give women two dollars a week for wages and drive them to ruin for support. Don’t look shocked. I don’t see how people can live on money made by the blood of human beings.”

“Annice!” thundered Mr. Gordon. “Not another word! Talk about things you understand. What do you know about Smith’s? It is a perfectly proper place. I own that establishment!”

“You,” gasped Annice, turning white with sheer surprise.

“I,” said Mr. Gordon. His expression added, Can it want further guarantee?

All the sensational facts that had been poured into the girl’s ears during the summer rushed back to her: stories of starvation in sweater-shops, of the employment of two-year old children in picking out bastings, of barefooted women forced by biting cold to wear the fur-lined cloaks

on which they were working in their filthy dens. Quick, hurt sympathy took possession of her. For the moment her father seemed responsible for the sins of all the industrial world.

"I—I am bitterly ashamed," she said. There was a red spot on each cheek. "Is the reason why you don't call it by your name because you think it would disgrace the firm of Gordon and Company, the best in the city? If all the things that are said about Smith's are true," said Annice, slowly, "I should rather starve in the streets than use money earned in that way."

Mr. Gordon had risen in wrath, and livid red spread over his face. This unprecedented hurt to his spiritual dignity dazed him. He repented already his rash confidence. Was this the return, he asked, for twenty years of careful training? Had his daughter no proper feeling of any kind, no gratitude, no reverence? Did she or did she not know the Fifth Commandment?

"Yes," said Annice, sadly, looking at him through fearless eyes. "But there's another commandment that isn't in the catechism, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'"

Then she turned to the window. She was wicked. She knew it, but she did not care. Something pent up for years had broken out. Her father gasped. He had thrust the responsibility of his life upon an outworn creed, and was pitifully at sea in this emergency, with no abstract rule to guide him.

"For a daughter to show so unnatural a spirit," he stormed. "I cannot understand it. It is a nice leave-taking before a long journey from which I may never return."

"How long are you going to be gone?" asked Annice, turning suddenly from the window.

"A fortnight, perhaps more," said her father. "It is a pleasant memory of Home I must carry with me."

"Do you own another of those places in Chicago?"

asked Annice. The voice did not sound like hers. The firm outline of her chin and the expression about her mouth reminded him of the way his mother used to look before she punished him.

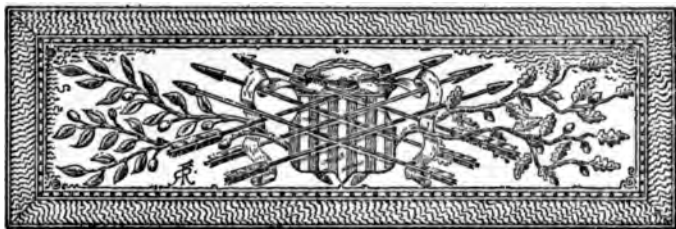
"I am going to find out about Smith's." The voice almost frightened him in its calmness. "It is not fair to take things on hearsay. But I must know. I have a right to know. In some way I shall find out."

Her conscience smote her, when, half an hour later, she stood on the verandah to watch her father as he was driven down to catch his train. He had said nothing more, but had gone away with a sense of hurt that penetrated farther than anything else had done through the conventionality of his fatherhood. His hunger for approval had met a cruel shock. That old, baffled longing for the sympathy from which his egoism had always shut him completely away was strong within him. All this showed in his face, and Annice was conscience-stricken. His hair looked so gray! But she braced her sinking indignation with that longing to do general good which so often follows a consciousness of having done specific wrong.

"That's the twelve-hundred dollar horse that John is driving," she said scornfully. "I presume people were starved to death because he was bought."

Her fierce imagination saw rows of women and children, dead, on the sidewalk, her father's victims. The great gulf that separates right from wrong evidently yawned between her and him. Then a swift ironic sense of the difference between what she had meant to do for her father, and what she had done, stung her. Doubt as to where right lay covered her face like a cloud, as she stood, leaning against a pillar, the wind playing in her hair. She reached out two groping hands as if searching for something warm and responsive to answer her appeal, and clasped them round the railing.

"Oh dear!" she sobbed, "I want something or somebody to believe in."



CHAPTER III



THE old city lies in a hollow by the sea. Eastward stretches the harbour, broad and blue, protected by two long arms of land. Through the harbour-gate come and go ocean steamers, schooners, fishing-smacks, vessels with all sails set, vessels with canvas half furled, and tiny boats with two straight sails moving softly, "wing and wing," as fisher people say. From the lighthouse at the harbour-mouth the whole city is visible on the curving shore, its smoking factory chimneys and clustered houses on the right of the river, its gray church spires and spacious lawns on the left, with a background of green hills in the west.

At the shore, on each side of the bay, the low land is broken here and there by slight cliffs of rock, where stunted cedars and weather-beaten oak trees face the sea. Between this and the city stretch great marshes, covered with silky grass that is haunted always by the sea wind. From the first faint green of early spring the colour changes here, never twice the same, running through its many greennesses of summer to the brown and gold of autumn. White sea-gulls fly over the marshes from the sea, crows pass cawing as if in answer to the cry of the gulls. Summer

flowers grow at the edges of the marsh and in the dryer spots, mallows, marsh pinks, cardinal flowers, and red August lilies; but all their glory cannot match the stern beauty, in late autumn and early winter, of dull brown stubble and yellow haystack against the blue of the water and the blue of the sky.

Winthrop is one of the important cities of the country, a great port of the middle south, a shipping centre, known east and north and south and west. It is an indomitable city which began its battles in sixteen hundred and something and has fought them ever since — Puritan, with a strain of Cavalier tradition. In the mingling of the two, the determination of the former, blending with a finer and more courtly tenacity in the latter, resulted in a type of character peculiar to Winthrop, stubborn, yet sweet. There is a firmness in the architecture of the old buildings which corresponds with a certain toughness of fibre in the faces of the early inhabitants, whose portraits look down from the walls of many houses.

They rest from their labours now under stones that are growing green in the old cemetery at the heart of the town: —

“Abraham Calvert, a Schooler of Oxford”; “Jonathan Winthrop, a Marchant of the Towne”; “Guilhelimus Smith, Vir præclarissima virtute et maximo ingenio.”

It is a versatile city, having learned in its infancy to master all the arts of peace and of war. The fort protecting the harbour bespeaks old battles. The smoke of the tall chimneys that dominate the northern end of the town stands for patient years of manufacture of cotton and woollen goods, ploughshares, carriages, boots, and shoes.

Yet Winthrop's real fame rests with her scholars, a hard-headed, sturdy, masculine race of scholars who have carried the name and grammars of the city, north, even as far as Connecticut and Massachusetts, west, even beyond Chicago. Wherever they have gone they have roused a love of learning, unsensational, humble, and manly.

In the centre of the town, near the cemetery, a quarter separated by the river from the manufacturing part, stand grouped the old university buildings. They are red brick structures, most of them, little, strong, and square: Mather Hall, Quincy Hall, St. Edmonds, and the old chapel, St. Cuthberts. The chapel, a building of gray stone, with a spire that suggests Magdalen Tower, was erected by a wealthy merchant who loved Oxford unto his death.

In front of that building stretches the common, a park where sometimes labouring men in brown blouses, drawn from the dingy streets of North Winthrop by the greenness here, sit on the benches in the summer twilight, while young scholars in cap and gown stroll past along the worn paths. North Winthrop means tenement-houses, small grocer-shops, pawnbrokers' establishments, and a life of work at hammer and anvil, sewing-machine, or shuttle and loom. South Winthrop means the scholarly calm of the Library, the Gothic traceries of St. Cuthberts, the beauty of shaven lawn and diamond-paned windows. Between the two cities stretches the long bridge across the river where electric cars go, trailing light.

If one stays long enough in South Winthrop, the spirit of the academic town comes to possess one's soul, and a meditative look of learned absent-mindedness grows in the face. The little university city has an atmosphere all its own. It is mediæval, walled in by ramparts more impenetrable than stone, self-centred, complete, sufficient unto itself. It has other than the world's standards. The unprofitable, the abstract is here the rule of life, and its pride is a pride of other-worldliness. These children and grandchildren of idealists are content to conquer the world by finding the right idea of it. Social position, strangely enough, is determined largely by character and by brains, for since the earliest days of Winthrop's existence, the "colledge" has been wrought into the innermost fibre of its being.

Here, meeting a pair of gray-haired men, and catching a

scrap of their conversation, one does not hear a comment on present prices, or on recent political events, but "Allow him his premises," one will be saying earnestly, "and his conclusions will follow." On the death of the tenth president of the university, the leading newspaper of the town considered no climax better to give to his list of virtues than "He always punctuated with taste." "Socius Hujus Universitatis" is the proudest epitaph that Winthrop has to bestow upon her buried sons.

In this world where thought is reality each hoary scholar—you will find nowhere else so much venerable white hair—constructs the universe after the pattern of his specialty. The foot of ground on which one stands is of necessity the centre of the whole! The invariable thesis of Professor Marston, the great geographer, is that character is determined by the lay of the land on which a given people happens to be.

"Look at the Swiss valleys!" he will say, pulling one strand of his long, grizzled beard. "Isolation, in a place cut off by mountains, produces hardness, independence, in some cases produces peculiar vice. It does one thing or the other. It leads to strength of character or to degeneration. No half-way measures with mountain people."

Professor Worthington holds the opinion that the only way to approach the study of life is through the microscope. To Dr. Bellingham, the chemist, church, state, faith, heroism are forms of chemical reaction. And the most learned Professor Caldwell, pathologist, regards sin in all its aspects as the result of microbic action, for which, possibly, at some future date, inoculation may prove a preventive.

The intense reality of the unseen brings with it disadvantages. The air of Winthrop is often too heavy with the mist of thought. When its citizens wish to be amused they go to lectures, but when they wish to be serious they do the same. Lecturing to one another, and inviting

lecturers from outside, they often find themselves lost in a maze of ideas, unable to proceed. The inevitable strife of warring words follows. Long, peaceful civil wars have marked the history of different schools of thought. Strife is carried on with decency, courtesy, and mutual respect. Department is divided against department, sometimes against itself. Science is red-handed from many a fray. In theology many a battle has been gained over many a wind-mill, and wine-skins innumerable have been stabbed. The department of philosophy wears laurels of a glorious line of victories,

“Where friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
And friend slew friend, not knowing whom he slew.”

Possibly, too, this long walking in the quiet ways of thought results in too strong a sense of pleasure in separation from the common people of every day. The scientists, with their hunger and thirst for reality, their yearning for facts, even if the facts must be invented; and the mystics, philosophical or literary, with their esoteric knowledge, their belief in certain mysterious, unlearnable, incommunicable revelations to the chosen few, are alike in standing apart from humanity at large. They hold up an inner standard of exclusiveness. They judge men and are silent. The world is examined and reexamined, and never knows how often it fails to pass.

Yet, on the other hand, some vividness of experience, the finding of actual reality in this old academic town, has quickened the current of existence over the entire land. The Doric simplicity of life; its stern endeavour; its impatience with easy solutions of the human problem; its passionate search for the truth, have proved a magnet for the youth of the country. They come from the four corners of the earth, leaving no empty nook or corner in Winthrop. Long lines of them file up and down the stairs of the university buildings, and day and night the campus echoes with the tramp of many feet. When the fashion is a fashion

of girt loin and eager muscle, thither young men will come.

In spite of this mental alertness, one finds in Winthrop that curious paradox of progressive thought, the tendency to become fixed, petrified. It harmonizes with the air of permanence that the city wears. Everything has an expression of having come to stay, and old buildings are so firmly rooted that when they go they must be blown up with dynamite. The store-rooms of these ancestral homes are filled with old furniture, old spinning-wheels, old straw bonnets, old clothes a little moth-eaten. Mental furniture may accumulate too. If ideas become somewhat moth-eaten, must they therefore be thrown away?

Here in the old city, with its quiet graveyard and its moving river, here, as elsewhere, is the pathos of the human mind trying to find an abiding-place. Here is the old cruelty of being forced to leave the safe shelter of one's father's ideas, and to search in the waste for shelter of one's own.

If the door leading to social success in Winthrop was invariably the university connection, the surest key to that door was the smile of Mrs. Appleton. She was the widow of a late trustee. The blood of the first governor of the state ran in her veins, and her ancestors had been college presidents. In wealth and in taste Winthrop had not her equal. Plump, handsome, superbly dressed, she represented the serious civilization of an earlier day, when women were still feminine and had not yet learned the improprieties of riding bicycles and studying science. That she upheld her ideals with sharpness of tongue only added to her effectiveness, and the entire corporation of the university quailed before the little quiver of her thin nostrils that always precluded a stab. In the management of the charity board Mrs. Appleton's word was the last one spoken always, and the only one that counted. Since her husband's death she had lived with her brother, Professor Penrose of the English department, in his severe but exquisite little house on

St. Paul Street. She might have supported a much more elegant establishment of her own, but "Virgil needs me," she used to say to herself, especially after she had left him quivering under one of the arrows of her sarcastic wit. Mrs. Appleton threw her entire energy into social life. She was giving to-night one of her distinguished dinners.

Her niece was with her. She had wanted to send the girl out to dinner with that interesting young Mr. Worthington who had just come back from abroad. But the girl committed the unpardonable sin of being a minute late, and, after entering the parlour, she stood, terrified, against the olive portière, with her pale yellow hair shining above her pale green gown. She might well shrink back from the gracious smile with which her aunt greeted her. Mrs. Appleton was even more impressive than usual. The dull red of her cheeks contrasted with the white of her shoulders. Her wicked eyes twinkled as she consigned her niece to the great Edward N. Bellingham, the most sublimely learned man in the room. If the girl had dreamed half his titles, she would have been even more terrified than she actually was. Mrs. Appleton's moment of triumph was short. In hastily rearranging her table she sent out the wife of a mere instructor before a professor's lady. It was the gravest social crime that Winthrop knew.

They were all there: Henry and his father, Professor Bellingham's wife and daughter, the college president and his wife, and even Benedict Warren. It was only Mrs. Appleton who could prevail upon the last-named guest to appear at a social function. The poignancy of her wit always tickled his palate. He liked, too, the deferential way in which Mrs. Appleton snubbed the president. Her social patronage was extended to that dignitary very reluctantly. He lacked traditions, she often said.

Mr. Penrose did the honours of host with a grace that his years of student life in England, lasting from his eighteenth to his twenty-sixth year, had deepened but not originated. His silver-gray hair, and thin, colourless face

presented a peculiar contrast to his sister's florid type. His English accent was at its best. The soft light of tall candles burning in silver candlesticks filled the room. The dining-room chairs, like the mantel, were of elaborately carved oak. Beautiful china, Dresden, with a mixture of Limoges, gleamed among the wines. The dinner, with its slow courses and its grave conversation, was an achievement. It was a synthesis, where sage and Epicurean met in one man over terrapin. It was a march of triumph, a symbol of life, moving on in ordered and stately ways to some grand finale.

Mrs. Appleton saw with appreciation that her niece was not happy. She had rallied from her first confusion and had ventured some remarks about the recent election in the city. But Mr. Bellingham had not for twenty-one years been known to talk about anything but his specialty, and he gently led her back to chemistry. She spoke of Madame Duse. He reminded her of gas. She alluded to some facts in the early history of Winthrop. He began to describe the new element, argon, and the way in which it was discovered. In desperation she alluded to the death of a young lieutenant in the Cuban war. This reminded Mr. Bellingham of the recent death of a noted Swedish chemist.

Over the soup, the terrapin, the game, and on to the fruit that ended the lingering dessert they talked of many things: the new edition of Plautus, in ten volumes, with exhaustive notes; the marriage of the daughter of the Greek professor to a young merchant from the West — she would miss Eastern culture! the gift to the university of the footprints of an *otozoem moodii*, hind feet — an animal extinct how many thousand years ago? the legacy to the library from the great German, Gustav Wilhelm Ekkehard von Holstein, of five hundred volumes on Platt Deutsch.

Henry was very grave. The glow of warmth and light and colour in the room, which harmonized so well with

Professor Worthington's genial smile, could not hide his son's slight frown. The young man, fresh from his hermit life of hard study and of battle with tough facts, found a certain unreality in this social function, conducted as seriously as if it were an act of devotion. Talking with Miss Bellingham, whom he had taken out, was not so bad as he had feared. He knew very little of women, and preferred them at a distance. This young lady, he thought with relief, did not seem like the rest. She was interested in athletics. She had travelled in the East, and had ridden horses, camels, donkeys. Conversation on these points was to Henry a welcome relief from the troubled social present, but his thoughts gradually wandered away. The home with all its furnishings, the dinner service, the painted designs on the walls, the carved furniture, troubled him. It was ostentatious, expensive, full of luxury that formed a marked contrast to the Spartan simplicity he had always known in Winthrop. The old reproach concerning America's greed had followed him constantly since his return, fastening itself upon him, octopus-wise, until everything he saw was grasped by one tentacle. Faces in the streets were full of the lust for money, it seemed to him. The interiors of all the homes he saw were visible proofs of the justness in that scathing criticism he had denounced as untrue. His fixed idea had perhaps destroyed his balance of vision, and he saw but one of many expressions. Certainly whenever his eyes wandered, the curse of gold met him, in the look of hunger for it, or in the satisfied content of display. Henry's father glanced over at him and sighed. There was certainly something unsophisticated about the boy, a lack of *savoir faire*. That he should have a son who did not know better than to think at a dinner party!

They took their coffee in the library after dinner. The dull colours of oak panelling, of leather chairs and choicely bound books brought out in clear relief the animated faces and gay evening gowns. The little groups of two or

three people, chatting together, paused and turned toward the president as he made a somewhat loud remark.

"It's a fine thing for your department, Worthington," observed the president, standing with his back to the fireplace, and slowly sipping his coffee, "it's a fine thing, that gift of Gordon's. It will bring your department up. Strange, money is usually tied up so that it is of little use, but this is a case of the right thing in the right place. Now you need —"

"Mr. President," interrupted the hostess, with a rudeness of which only the well-bred dare to be guilty, "I can't allow you to talk shop over your coffee." She engaged that gentleman in conversation for a minute, then turned and found herself facing Benedict Warren. He was seated on a sofa near the fire, smiling with pleasure over the lady's reproof to her guest.

"You don't mind discussing forbidden topics yourself, do you, Mrs. Appleton?" asked Mr. Warren, rising and motioning her to a seat on the sofa. "It's just other people you mind, isn't it?"

"If you've got anything to say that oughtn't to be said," remarked Mrs. Appleton, "please impart it at once. I never see you on the street without wanting to say, 'My good Thersites, come in and rail.' It is a mystery to me how anybody can know so many things that oughtn't to be known."

"Do you happen to be aware," he asked, seating himself beside her, "of how Gordon makes his money?"

"In the dry-goods establishment of Gordon and Company, the best in the city," responded Mrs. Appleton.

"Nothing of the kind," said Benedict Warren. He lowered his voice. Unwonted feasting had made him communicative. "That's only a blind — respectable house to keep up the family reputation. His other places make the money. He bought up, long ago, three cheap department shops, one here, one in Boston, one in Chicago. It's Smith's here; it's Mott's in Chicago — the bargain-

counter kind where they advertise fifty-dollar cloaks for nine dollars, on Monday. You go at eight o'clock on Monday and find the cloaks all sold, the point being that there never were any such cloaks. Gordon's made more money by tricks like that than," Warren paused, "all the men in the university put together would make in a dozen lifetimes."

Warren stopped. Henry's eyes were fixed upon him with an eager look that he did not understand. Henry always made him uncomfortable. Warren took advantage of a movement in the room to go over and sit down by his friend Worthington. In five minutes they were quarrelling as only people between whom there is perfect understanding can quarrel. Warren, listening with his head thrown back, looked like a French duke of the old school. The lean distinction of his lower jaw could never be forgotten. There was a grim smile about his mouth as Worthington said hotly: —

"You show lack of the scientific temper, sir. You have no sense of the real value of things. You are blinded by appearances. Every grain of dust in this world of ours, regarded in the right way, is worth spending a man's life over."

Warren looked at his friend. He gloried in Worthington's reputation, his intellect, his enthusiasm, his childlike faith that nothing could kill. These men had been friends from childhood. They had not cared for the same woman, as David and Jonathan invariably do in books. Warren had never cared for any woman. There was no room for one in his heart.

"Worthington," he said, with his slow, peculiar drawl, "I don't see what this has got to do with the present of the track of the hind feet of the *otozoem moodii* to your university."

"You said," answered Worthington, with a sudden smile, "you said that the thing is of no account."

"I said," remarked Warren with deliberation, the Dan-

tesque jaw moving slowly, "that a live animal is better than a dead one, let alone a dead one's tracks. And I said I'd rather give the university a good live mastiff like Ulysses —"

"Which is equivalent to saying," protested Worthington, "that the great endeavour of science over infinitesimal things is worthless. I tell you, Warren, the least truth ascertained about the world of fact is worth all the cheap generalizations printed or written."

Benedict Warren yawned and rose to his feet.

"I'm tired," he observed. "I'm going home."

Henry rose, too, and touched Mr. Warren's arm.

"Are you sure that charge you brought against Mr. Gordon is true?" he asked. "It's an ugly bit of history."

Henry's father sighed. Was it because the boy had had only masculine training that this abruptness of manner asserted itself even on social occasions? Henry should have known better than to make a remark like that. The president had heard it, and was looking bewildered. Mrs. Bellingham, who, like Henry, had half overheard Benedict Warren's remark to Mrs. Appleton, was frowning in disapproval. Everybody was either puzzled or indignant, but Henry stood there, gazing eagerly at Warren, and oblivious of everybody else. The chance remarks about the dry-goods establishment of Mr. Gordon had been to the young man like sparks to tinder, firing a whole train of thought.

"Suppose we finish this up on the way home," said Benedict Warren. "I'm sleepy. Good night," and he left the room.

Henry followed. Miss Penrose looked wistfully after him. Her soft brown eyes, very like her Uncle Virgil's, had rested on him with much curiosity at dinner. He looked interesting. She wished that he would come to talk with her, but he did not come. Professor Worthington looked after his son in hurt surprise, for the boy had gone away without him.

"I think it's a shame," Henry was saying to his father's friend out on the sidewalk. "The university ought not to accept the gift if the money was earned that way."

Benedict Warren had put his pipe into his mouth.

"I don't know to what better use he can put his money after he's got it," he observed, "than make a decent use of some of it as he is doing."

"But you said the man isn't honest," said Henry, earnestly.

"That man," observed Mr. Warren, calmly, "makes business his idol, and he has no other gods before it. If it would advance his business he would let his old father be sandwich man for him on the street and never know why one should object. Honest? He does as the rest of them do. You can't expect a man to be honest all alone."

"I don't agree with you," said Henry, hotly. "It isn't right for us to take ill-gotten gains. It is disreputable. We ought to protest. I'd like to rise in my class-room and say that that kind of thing is wrong."

"Henry," observed Mr. Warren, with his slowest drawl, "I'd advise you to hold your tongue. I'm afraid you don't appreciate the situation. An institution like this is carried on by the gifts of wealthy men. It's the same all over the country. Do you suppose you can rise up and air your private convictions with safety if they don't happen to square with the opinions of the patrons and the trustees? Nonsense! There isn't an educational institution in the country where freedom of speech is allowed."

"I don't believe it," said Henry. "I can't believe that of Winthrop University. Men like my father haven't taught there all these years for nothing. Trustees like —"

"Like me?" suggested Warren.

"Like you," assented Henry, with a laugh. "Trustees like you haven't served that institution so long to leave it in such a state of bondage."

"It's true," insisted Warren, "of the whole lot, Win-

throp among them. You'll have to fall into step with the rest."

Henry looked up at the stars, then back to the thin figure at his side. While heaven was stretched over his head, he said to himself, clenching his hands, he would not descend to such standards as those advocated by his father's friend. His mood of passionate protest was broken by a dry remark from his companion.

"We seem to have left your father in the lurch. Don't you think we'd better go back and look him up?"

After the guests had gone, and the pretty niece had retired, Mr. Penrose and his sister indulged in a half-hour's sleepy conversation by the library fire. The broad chair in which the lady sat became her regally. A similar one emphasized her brother's slenderness.

"I think that Mr. Worthington's brilliant son must be more brilliant at some times than at others," observed the lady, with a yawn. "This was apparently not one of the times."

She carefully arranged the laces about her neck. Her listener absorbed this remark with perfect indifference. When she launched into the story, however, that Mr. Warren had told her in regard to Gordon's business history, her brother's opaque brown eyes lighted up with unwonted interest. She thought she must be talking unusually well.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Nothing, nothing," he answered, looking meditatively at the dying fire, "only one of the little touches of human irony that one meets now and then. Life is so much more interesting than books."

Mrs. Appleton tapped the floor with her heel.

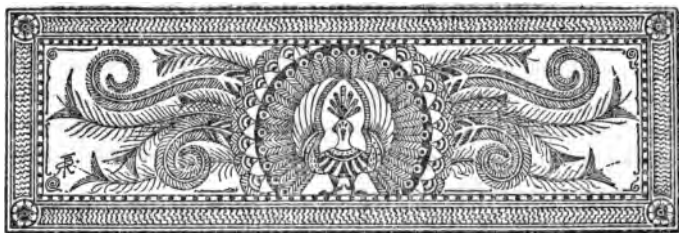
"It's just a story about a girl I meant to help once. If the account of Gordon is true, it involves a curious twisting up of things. I will tell you to-morrow. It is too late now."

Mrs. Appleton hesitated a minute. Virgil's unattached

interest in the irony of things was one of the irritations of her existence.

"To say that it is one of the people you meant to help and didn't, Virgil, gives me no clew," she observed. "There are so many of them."

"Good night, Juliette," said Mr. Penrose, with stately politeness.



CHAPTER IV



T was a soft gray day, full of mist with the sunshine behind it, subdued, peaceful, with a calm on the water, and the slow wings of gulls half breaking the mist, white against gray. It was a day like his mood.

Mr. Penrose had dressed, not with unusual, but with his usual care. For some reason the material of his clothes always seemed softer and finer than that of other people's garments. They held their own in an unobtrusive, self-respecting way. He had closed the street door gently but firmly behind him. He was going out to call on Annice Gordon. It was Annice who had once said that she wished she were half as ladylike as Professor Penrose.

His decision to go was due to Mrs. Appleton, for her parting words of last night stung in his ears. Those infrequent but telling suggestions that his was a Hamlet-like and undecided nature always roused him for the time being into action of some kind, never before into action so important as this. He had punished Juliette for her remark. At breakfast, when he had seen that her eyes were eager for the story denied last night, he had held strictly to alien topics, talking of Boccaccio and of the new tariff bill. Courteous, as always, he had managed

to ignore each hint that her curiosity threw out. At luncheon he had purposely been late. That meal over, he had retired to his apartments, spending an hour alone with a great resolve. Now he was already far on the way to its accomplishment.

He decided to walk. It was only four miles to Winthrop Heights where Annice lived in the castle facing the sea. Mr. Penrose was athletic in his own delicate way, and he wished to compose his mind. Something in the atmosphere challenged him, roused him. Another man might have found the calm oppressive, but for him, as he left behind the city streets and stepped upon the driveway skirting the sea, old hopes began to stir, old fancies, long since dead or half asleep and dreaming, came back to him.

"All is silver-gray,
Placid and perfect,"

he quoted at the first glimpse of the sea, and he stepped more quickly because of the half-mystical beauty of the day. Then he sank back into a slower step, thinking of Annice.

She had been a little girl when he had seen her first, with gray-brown eyes and two long braids of pale brown hair. She used to visit his sister's daughter, her only child, dead now, and buried in the old cemetery, "Frances, aged sixteen."

Annice had been always so merry, so mischievous, so gentle, so impertinent, so dear, with moods that changed faster than the shades in the water. Sensitive, daring, spirituelle, she was the same now as then. Fashionable boarding-school had not spoiled her, as he had feared it might. He had followed her very closely since childhood, corresponding with her in the character of literary adviser, going now and then as if by accident to spend part of the summer in the place whither Annice had been carried by her aunt.

He remembered her quick and inexplicable changes of mood. Once, when the children had been playing "Every

man to his own den," on his sister's great, shady lawn, Annice had paused by her tree and had burst into uncontrollable tears. He could see those tear-drops now, trickling down between her childish fingers. She had refused to tell what the matter was, and had gone home, red-eyed, a quiver on her lips. Years afterward she had explained. It was a suddenly remembered story of the death of two kittens, cruelly killed by a coachman in haste and in anger. One of her playmates had told it to her two weeks before. It had haunted her dreams ever since. It had a way of intruding itself between her and the sunshine.

And once, at a funeral, the first she had ever attended, she had burst out laughing in the midst of the discourse, filling her father's soul with shame. It was only the picture of old Professor Hendricks, she confessed afterward to her mother, holding his golden harp in heaven, without his pipe.

"I didn't mean to, I didn't mean to," she pleaded. "I just saw him and he looked so unhappy."

The tenderness of Penrose's mood increased as he walked. He thought of the child's quick susceptibility, her eager way of listening when one talked. It was easy to sway her thought. He had seen her taking colour from his own mental state when he had expounded to the children one of his favourite bits of literature. There was a chameleon quality about her that might be dangerous under other circumstances, but here? A pardonable wave of self-content surged over his soul: Annice and he, "like perfect music set to noble words."

Professor Penrose strolled on very slowly. Something in this clinging mist softened all harsh outlines, veiled reality, hushed the imperious demands of a brute world. Marsh and meadow, water, and strip of beach, fences, trees, even the road at his feet wore the aspect of ideal things.

Yes, he would do it. Not as the vulgar love but in his own way he had loved that little girl from her childhood. He would go and tell her so. He did not quicken his

pace, but walked more slowly, an unwonted fire burning in his wary brown eyes. Annice sympathized with so many of his tastes. That was, after all, of chiefest importance to human beings, taste. Not the great things make up the subtle affinities that draw people together, but the little, imperceptible likenesses and differences. He knew a young man who had broken his engagement because the lady of his choice sent him *Ben Hur* for a birthday gift.

"I should have done the same thing," he reflected.

But Annice sympathized with the best in art and in literature so far as she knew it. Did she not always agree with him? She was delicately organized, keen to perceive, hungry for the beauty that had been shut out of her life. Her father's wealth had surrounded her with only vulgar things. It was strange that so finely touched a nature should have its roots in such rough soil. To guide the taste of this exquisite creature should be the solace of his remaining days.

After all, the flowering of the old Scotch race into a thing so beautiful was not strange. The prayers of all her ancestors had shaped that wonderful mouth. Years of patient devotion on the part of women whose tired hands were folded to rest had bequeathed to this girl's face a look that made it unlike all other girls' faces. It was a nature serious and sweet, for Annice was serious, except when she was expected to be. That little strain of perversity gave piquancy to her charm. There was a dash of Ariel in Miranda. To master this gentle, wilful thing, with her quick emotional changes of extreme joy and extreme grief; to rouse the stored-up passion that generations of suppressed feeling had left, was for him. Maidenhood had been asleep for generations under an icy Puritan exterior. Siegfried-wise, he would waken her with a kiss.

Here his eyes fell upon a huge board structure, shaped like a comet, and bearing in great letters across the star, SMITH'S! Mr. Penrose stopped and shuddered. That

was Gordon, his mark. The thought suggested the tale he had heard the night before. What would Juliette say to his marriage with this man's daughter?

"ALL MUST DIE," ran a legend written on the long curving tail of the comet: "THE OLD AND THE YOUNG ALIKE PASS AWAY, BUT THE NAME OF THE MAN WHO SELLS GOOD CLOTHING WILL NEVER DIE."

It was horrible. He went quickly on. Last night's criticism of the owner of Smith's for concealing his real name puzzled Mr. Penrose. If he were connected with a place like that he too would want to conceal his name! He did not understand. Money was money, and most ways of getting it were vulgar. It was not that: it was the image of Mr. Gordon that thrust itself between the lover and his dream. He was socially impossible, with his new clothes, his shiny black hats, and his air, when talking with one, of being silently engaged in adding up columns of figures in a ledger. Yes, it would trouble Juliette. When her little daughter had played with Annice Gordon the child had been too young to be a social problem, but now? If a malicious suggestion of pleasure in discomfiting the too epigrammatic Juliette came to Mr. Penrose, he thrust it resolutely away. He was a gentleman. As for the dilemma, it could not be helped. His own horizon was broader than Juliette's. Looking at Annice purely in artistic light, that little touch of plainness was a finishing charm. It fitted the old-fashioned name, a name that was a melody to him, like the poet's

"Five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys."

The question of money troubled him more in another aspect. Would Annice miss the luxury that had surrounded her? Professorial salaries were small at Winthrop. Yet he owned his beautiful little house with its drooping porch roofs, its olive-green shingled sides, its

harmonies of brown and green and gold inside. A modest European trip could come in nearly every summer: Europe with Annice — Annice growing every day more appreciative. Now there was in her still a touch of the savage. Those flashes of intuitive insight into the beauties and harmonies of things did not preclude lapses into barbarism. She had yet to acquire a trained æsthetic conscience.

So he went on in his quest to win his lady. Sir Launcelot was great in love and war; Sir Galahad in holiness; Sir Tristram was both warrior and sweet musician; Professor Penrose's strong point was his pronunciation.

A sudden, grating noise jarred on his nerves. His nerves were sensitive, and he shivered. Then, out of the fog, appeared a blue cart loaded with marsh grass. A little old man with shaggy hair and beard and drooping felt hat sat on the hay. He was so thin that a strong wind might have blown him away.

"Tain't very good fishing weather," he remarked politely. Penrose lifted his hat. He could not think quickly enough of anything to say, and he watched the cart with a feeling of regret as it creaked past. If he were only a little more ready! He was glad Juliette was not here. This growing absent-mindedness troubled him so much that he relapsed into it.

For contemporary life did not hold Professor Penrose. Unconsciously he held the academic tradition that literature has been written, life has been lived. The present was to him comparatively valueless, full of vulgar things, of vulgar people. It was Benedict Warren who had once remarked with a twinkle that he wished that, as Penrose cared so much for the past, he had lived three hundred years ago. When asked to explain, he had declined to do so.

Yet Penrose was not without interest in the world about him. Remote, aloof, he regarded it as an interesting spectacle, safe enough to watch from his vantage ground of literary indifference. Its spectacles fell into picturesque combinations. That cart now, and that old man. At first

it was only a picture, and he hunted about in his mind for an aphorism he felt lurking there. Penrose, head of the subjective school in English at Winthrop, had published once a little book of epigrams called *Pensées*.

"I presume," Mrs. Appleton had said, as she regarded the title, "that you used the French term because you considered 'Thoughts' too strong a word?"

The work he had done on this book had resulted in a certain habit of mind, that of always condensing his train of thought into a single sentence.

But the blue cart entered farther into his mind, roused a long train of reminiscence. Somewhere, sometime, he had seen a picture like that before—a hay-field, an old gray horse, two girls tossing hay upon a little blue cart. Yes, it was a memory of that summer, ten years ago, when he, taking a solitary horseback trip forty miles up in the country—he was fond of solitude—had wakened one afternoon to find himself by the roadside, with a terrible pain in his leg, his horse gone. He had been thinking about something and the horse had shied. The situation had amused Juliette very much after her anxiety in regard to his health had been allayed.

A farmer and his wife had rescued him, taken him home, cared for him for six weeks. It was his first glimpse of rustic life. He had sunned himself in the orchard when he had recovered sufficiently to crawl out there, and there he had seen those two girls, his host's daughters, gathering hay.

He remembered the younger more distinctly, little Mary, Mary Burns. She was the prettier. She had been barefooted that day in all the stubble. Her sunbonnet hung on her neck. He had never seen so radiantly healthy, happy a face, with the chubby cheeks, the bright blue eyes, the brown tan on forehead and chin. She had told him that she was going to earn money enough in the hay-field for an education, and he had promised to help her. It would be worth while, he had said. That atmosphere of strength

and health that radiated from her was a rich promise for future days.

But—he had forgotten. Then the letter had come, saying that the farm was sold, that the girls had gone to work in the city. He was ashamed. Those people had been very good to him. He had listened sympathetically to Mrs. Burns's story of her woes. It was all so long ago now—perhaps they no longer needed him. But it was strange, it was ironic, if the story Warren had told last night was true! If Gordon was the unconfessed owner of Smith's, and if one of these girls was working there, under hard conditions, then, unknown to everybody, the old injury Gordon had done the family was continuing in a new way, for Gordon was Mrs. Burns's own cousin, and he had, she maintained, cheated her of her inheritance.

The old, kindly intention came back to Professor Penrose's heart, strengthened by the mood that had led him on his present quest. He would try yet to get a clew to the whereabouts of those two girls. He would go himself some day to Smith's and inquire for Mary. Then he went on his way and forgot her again.

A suspicion as to his own state of mind had intruded itself into his thoughts. Was he feeling all he should feel on such a quest as this? That literary second-consciousness that had been developing all his life robbed him for a minute of his satisfaction. He was not in a Romeo mood surely. Even a sonnet of Petrarch would make too heavy demands upon him just now. Nor was he taking quite the attitude of the *Vita Nuova*. The touch of melancholy was strengthened by perceiving that they were taking away some of his pet haystacks of brown marsh grass.

He had reached the entrance to the Gordon place. The lodge was of gray stone, like the house beyond. He turned into the pathway that led along the gravelled drive. The house looked like a fortress, lifting itself on the top of the ridge, big, ugly, pretentious, with no trees to soften its outlines. Gothic tower and donjon keep had been robbed

of their individuality to make up the mongrel architecture. Penrose followed the curving path, mounted the steps under the porte-cochère, and rang.

Miss Annice? the maid asked. No, she was not at home.

Would she return soon?

The maid did not know.

"I can't tell. She took a trunk with her, but she didn't say. Her father's in Chicago."

Penrose turned and walked toward the driveway again. The sun was almost down, and was breaking the mist. The water lay, without a ripple, opalescent, under a changing sky. The lover sighed. Perhaps it was as well. He could have time to think.



CHAPTER V



ATHER and son led in Lancaster Place a life of quiet scholarliness. The older man had outgrown his restlessness of spirit. The younger man had not yet voiced his. They had lived so long together that both had nearly forgotten that the father's existence stretched farther back than the son's.

The home had belonged to Henry's mother. The broad rooms, the high ceilings, the massive furniture dated from the early part of the century. Nothing had been changed. Small window-panes half shut out the light. Modern conveniences were lacking. A great-grandfather's wealth had taken concrete shape here in mahogany sideboard and dining-table, marble fireplaces and exquisite old engravings. Filial piety had preserved them all.

The money had grown out of successful manufacture of carriages. A little after the middle of the century the business had begun to fail, for a new firm, with a patent tire, had drawn patronage to the West. Diminishing returns had not meant diminishing family pride, only a simpler style of living behind the white pillars.

Eleanor Worthington's father had bequeathed her the house three years after her marriage. He had died there, in the great poster bed with silk hangings that stood in the

spare bedroom. The old man had been fond of his famous son-in-law who was making a name for himself so rapidly. He was fonder still of his dark-eyed daughter, an only child.

In less than six months after his death his daughter had followed him. They lay side by side in the cemetery now. From Alfred Worthington's study-window a bit of the high wall round their abiding-place was visible. Above it white monuments and dark hemlock trees stood out against the blue sky. Twice each day for over twenty years the professor, as he went down the busy street by the old burying-ground, had lifted his hat and passed his wife's grave with uncovered head.

He had not allowed anything about the house to be altered. The same old Brussels carpets, with their antiquated patterns, covered the floors. The same haircloth sofa and chairs disfigured the sitting-room. He kept still upon his bureau the cut-glass bottles that had been there the first year of his married life. In the world of scholarship the professor was alive to new ideas. For the rest of life he liked to keep things as they were. He protested one day when Henry, at fifteen, had insisted on having the old parlour lamp removed. It was a venerable object that had had an honourable history for forty years. Its glass pendants, used as prisms, had made beautiful play-things for Henry as a child. One of them he had buried, as the choicest possible funeral offering, with a goldfish.

"Leave your grandfather's things as you found them, Henry," his father had said gently. "You won't find better."

The lamp came back.

The boy and his father had faced each other three times a day across the great table in the dining room ever since Henry had been big enough to come. The child had looked lost, in those earliest years of all, with his legs dangling from the high chair. The maid who served — she was the housekeeper's daughter — had been very

watchful over him, and Henry began to acquire his father's table manners almost as soon as he began to acquire his abstract views.

They used always the old silver, the old china, the old cut glass. Of the last there were only a few pieces left. The little niceties and formalities of life were dear to the professor's heart. Some of the silver had belonged to the wife's family, some to the Worthingtons. The scholar son-in-law had brought a moderate amount of wealth to stay the decaying fortunes of the merchant's house, for the reward of good scholarship and sound theology had become visible in purple and fine linen, silver and even gold appointments.

Alfred Worthington's modest salary had been just enough to let him keep the old house without change. It had been untouched, except for occasional repairs in the roof and in the windows that Henry had broken. With grief the master of the house had consented to have the front door replaced. It was worn, to be sure, but it had associations.

Henry and his father had lived alone most of the time. A maiden sister of Alfred Worthington had offered to sacrifice her remaining years to him and to the boy. The brother was about to brace himself for this martyrdom on her part when an old lover suddenly came back from the West and carried her off. There come times when one is resigned even to the will of God. It was with a submission almost indecent that the father tucked his boy up in bed the night after hearing the news.

The house had always a sense of quiet. There were but two servants. Of social life there was little. Alfred Worthington was too much absorbed in his science and in his son for that. It was not until long after his wife had died that he would go out for dinner. He often had a midnight supper with his crony, Warren. Warren sometimes made a third at the table in Lancaster Place, but guests were very rare. Father and son both liked the hush in their ears in those great rooms.

As for training, the child had received none. The father had forgotten that. He kept the boy with him most of the time except during his laboratory hours. He had accustomed himself to read while Henry was playing or talking. So on winter afternoons and early evenings they shared each other's company in the library, where the rows of books upon the walls were broken only by the fireplace. Here were the only comfortable chairs in the house.

It was because he was so busy in leading his own blameless life that the professor had forgotten to bring up his son. The boy, little theology having been taught him, invented a system of his own. From the day when he had informed his comrade, Samuel Bradley, aged four, that "Father made the world," and the other boy had retorted, "He didn't, God did," only to be worsted by the answer, "Then Father made God," all abstract problems of philosophy and of ethics seemed to be solved for the child. The very existence of his father answered most of his questions. He was a born hero-worshipper, and his adoration for his hero might have been absurd, if that gentleman had been one whit less upright, courteous, intellectually keen, and pure-minded than he was.

The few admonitions that the boy had received were all the more effective for being infrequent.

"Henry," his father had said to him one day when the child was seven, "when a question is asked you, give a direct answer, if you answer at all."

There are not many men in existence who, in thinking and in speaking, go so directly to the point as does Henry Worthington.

One or two other pieces of intellectual training Alfred Worthington had vouchsafed to give his son.

"Never seem to know a thing when you don't," he said. "It is hardly necessary to tell my son not to pretend to have knowledge that he hasn't, and I mean, too, know when you don't know a thing. That is the great secret of scholarship. When you get to be my age," he added,

"you will usually find that whatever it is, you don't know it."

Once, when the boy had been telling of a mental victory achieved over a high school comrade, his father had told him that it was always better to conceal superior information when there was any danger that its revelation might make other people uncomfortable.

One great principle of ethics, delivered in connection with a mild reproof, had made a strong impression upon the child. He had asked if he might go fishing.

"Decide for yourself," his father had said. "I want you to make up your own mind about things. Only, always tell me what you decide. I have sometimes thought that you are not quite ready to take your share of responsibility."

On another occasion, when Henry had wavered in regard to doing something that Samuel Bradley thought was wrong, his father had remarked: —

"Don't live up to other peoples' convictions, Henry. Have some of your own, or none." This admonition had echoed curiously in Henry's memory through his years of growth. It became the key-note of all his endeavour. Perhaps this advanced training, a training better suited to maturity, some people said, caused the deep sense of responsibility that Henry had had even as a little child. The feeling that the burden of things must be borne on his shoulders strengthened as the shoulders grew broader, developing into a seriousness that gave a graver cut to his face than one often sees in young men's faces.

Even in matters religious the boy's convictions had not been dictated to him by his father. The perfect faith that had meant in Alfred Worthington unresting struggle toward perfect action had stopped short of words. He was shy of speaking of matters of belief, and to him it seemed that the embodied creed was better than the spoken one. He had come home one day, while Henry was a lad in college, to find his son stretched out on the library floor, his face

buried in a smart new book, *The Mythology of To-day*. It was a treatise, that, by the attractions of Old English letters, broad margins, and heavy linen paper, endeavoured to explain away our fathers' faith. The professor's heart had been wrung with love and pain as the boy rose, the sunlight falling like sifted gold through the closed shutters on his flushed cheeks and shining eyes. His lips were working.

"Do you believe there is a God?" he asked.

"I do," said the professor, simply. He paused. Then he put his hand on the boy's head and smoothed the brown hair as a mother might have done.

"Henry," he said, "you have wakened to the problems that nobody can think out for you. Go on. I trust you. And remember, whatever your doubts are about the great things, your duty in the small is always the same. Remember your fellow human beings, and be good. Whether or not there is God, there is uprightness, and there is courtesy."

The very reticence of the father had brought conviction to the son. He had trained himself to know the right by watching the expression on his father's face. They had grown into almost perfect moral and intellectual sympathy. As each had always known without speaking how the other felt, so, as Henry's mind developed, they learned to know without words each other's thoughts. The boy had inherited the scientific temper, the slow and accurate way of judging, the reverence for fact, that had made Alfred Worthington a power in the world of scholars. From the day when the child had said with great seriousness, "Father, when you die I shall have you stuffed and keep you in the corner so that I shall know what to do," to the day of the student's return from Europe with the conviction that his father's advice was all he needed as guidance in this new work he yearned to do, finding what his father thought about anything had meant for Henry Worthington finding the truth.

So the old life had gone on. Now the new life had begun, so like the old in all outward details that neither realized how great a change in point of view the years abroad had meant for Henry. There was delight in falling back into the old habits. They walked together in the afternoons. At night, when Henry started for bed, his father, who had been glorying all the evening in the intense energy with which his son attacked the piles of books before him, would rise, place his hand on the boy's shoulder, and — but it is nobody's concern how Professor Worthington said good night to his son. Evening after evening the older man would gaze at the younger with radiant eyes, trying to think himself back to the days of his loneliness. But of that painful interval when he had sat by himself at table, facing his ancestral spoons alone, the less said the better. The professor never said anything about it himself.

The night after Mrs. Appleton's dinner they sat together in the library. Work was over. With heads leaned back and feet stretched out comfortably toward the fire on the hearth, they half dozed, side by side. The leaping flames and the two green-shaded student lamps lighted the room, with its sombre books, its old gilt picture-frames, its table in the centre, and, in the corner, Eleanor Worthington's writing-desk, where the last letter she had tried to write lay unfinished. To her husband it always seemed as if she might at any minute come and touch the pen once more. Her face looked down from the wall, a portrait done by an artist who had been able to understand the wistfulness of the dark eyes and the unsatisfied quiver of her under lip. Alfred Worthington was gazing at it. He too understood — now.

Room had been made at one side of the library for a small new book-case where Henry's books stood in an impressive row: *Zuckerkanhl*, *Zur Theorie des Preises*; Cournot, *Principes mathématiques des richesses*; Böhm-Bawerk, *Kapital und Kapitalzins*; Marshall, *Principles of Economics*; Pantaleoni, *Principii di economia pura*. Above

the book-case hung a beautiful silver-mounted oar, relic of the days when Henry, who had been a famous athlete in his college career, had helped win a great victory in the Yale-Winthrop boat race. Under it hung a gold medal, fruit of an intercollegiate debate when Henry had been champion for Winthrop. The boy had protested against the parading of these trophies on the wall.

"Can't you leave them there because I like to see them?" his father had asked. He was equally proud of both.

Henry was lost in thought, and his father was wondering whither the boy's mind had led him. The professor was slightly hurt. For the first time Henry had forgotten to draw his father's chair to the fireplace for him as they abandoned their books for the night. The scowl of absorption on the young man's face was like the scowl he had worn the night before, and the older man was conscious of a twinge of jealousy concerning this train of thought that he could not divine and was not invited to share. Suddenly Henry started up in his chair and faced his father.

"Don't you think that that gift of Gordon's to the university is a disgrace? I've been thinking it out all day. We ought to protest against accepting it."

The father looked up, puzzled. He never said "why" to Henry except with his eyebrows.

"If what Warren says is true," the young man continued, "that money isn't clean. Winthrop has no right to touch it. It seems to me that, in a young country like this, universities ought to set certain moral standards for people at large. We have a responsibility toward the public that perhaps the universities of the old world have not. In taking a gift like this we condone dishonesty, we condone oppression of the weak and helpless. Refusal would mean temporary crippling, it would mean cutting off resources, but the gain would be tenfold greater. It would set people to thinking about righteous and unrighteous business transactions, and there is need of such

thought in a mercenary civilization like our own." Henry was quoting the remark of young Herr Ruprechts-toettner that had almost led to a duel. "If a university is anything, it is a place where the right should be taught, and I think that a protest against this gift is a duty we owe our *alma mater*."

It was not the firelight alone that had brought a glow into Henry's face. His father looked at him with a certain bewilderment that settled into an expression of grave displeasure. The phrase, "a mercenary civilization like our own," grated on every nerve in his body.

"Our first duty to our *alma mater*, Henry," he remarked slowly, "lies in doing our own work well. Our second duty lies in letting alone things that do not concern us. My task is with my microscope. Yours is there." He pointed toward Henry's book-case.

"But I don't want," said the boy, eagerly, "to stand off from the practical issues of life and take an ink-and-paper view of things. I want something real. My mind has been running for a long time on the contradictions of our American civilization. We pose as the deliverers of the downtrodden and the poor. We really stand for a great machine where the strong and unscrupulous can build up huge fortunes, and the weak go to the wall. That's the reason why I think every man in the country who has a conscience ought to protest against the workings of our unrighteous laws of trade. I'm tired," there was a quiver in the young man's voice, "of seeing such an infernal amount of misery in the world."

"Misery?" asked Professor Worthington; "where?"

"Everywhere," said Henry, briefly. "Nine tenths of the human race is crushed by grinding poverty. Look at the New York slums. It's the same in London, in Paris, in Vienna. I've seen them all. Go into Attorney Street here—"

"I never do," said his father, severely. "I hope you don't." He looked at the boy, dazed. Henry had had a

sharp awakening to certain phases of life unknown to the older man.

"I've been puzzling over these problems," said Henry, "for three years. I've investigated all the organized charity work in every place I've visited. I've studied up all the schemes for social reconstruction. It's a blank puzzle, all of it. None of the schemes work. But the suffering remains, the daily starving and dying. I can't understand why the poor are always underpaid for the work they do, why work should be so hard to find. 'To him that hath shall be given.' That's both biblical and unchristian. The only people who can make money are those who don't need it."

"But there are," suggested the father, "perfectly organized relief societies."

"That's just it," said the boy, bitterly. "Who was it who said that we would do anything in the world for the poor except get off their backs?"

"I doubt if the poor need you," the father remarked.

"But I need them," said the boy, with fierceness. "I tell you, I am tired of abstract existence. The scholar—"

"The scholar," said the professor, solemnly, "is the interpreter between God and His world."

"Then he ought to study His world," said Henry eagerly. "It is all right for you. You have your bugs and worms. You are working directly on the material furnished you, while I—my raw material means, I think, the poor. There is maladministration of justice in this city. There is a corrupt state of things in the shops. There is no fairness in the laws of trade. Gigantic trusts are every day swallowing up the money of the poor. I want to take my coat off, sir, and roll up my shirt-sleeves and fight."

"Why, Henry," said the bewildered older man, "it isn't a thing for a gentleman to do."

"That story last night started the whole thing up. I think I see where to begin. Look at Gordon," said Henry,

recklessly. "A man thinks after he has made a fortune ^S by inventing a patent poison, or selling whiskey, or gambling in stocks, or running a dishonest dry-goods shop, that if he only endows a theological seminary, or sends his money to the heathen, he is doing a lot of good. From what Warren said last night, that money of Gordon's isn't fit to touch. He has cheated the poor, and he's trying to win the respect of God and man by giving his ill-gotten gains to the university."

The attack upon the city that he loved was too much for Alfred Worthington. His gray eyes were like steel as he looked at his son.

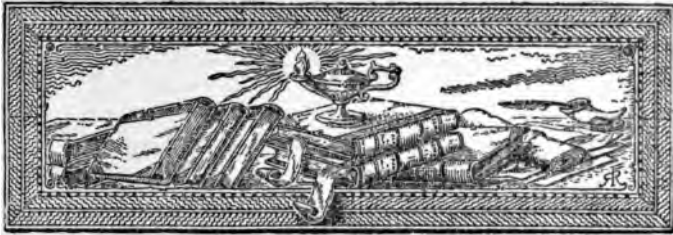
"Henry," he said, "Mr. Gordon is, I believe, a man of business honour. He could hardly be less, as a trustee of this university and a prominent citizen of this town. If your charges were true, I also should wish to protest against this gift, all the more because it was made to my department. But you have no proof of your hasty generalization. Gentlemen do not say such things. In stating your conclusions without facts you show a lack of the scientific temper."

A curious little sarcastic smile that the father had never seen before flashed across the boy's face. From the vantage-ground of a wider experience he was wondering at the narrowness of view of a purely civic standard whose thesis apparently was, "Whatever exists in Winthrop is right." Then a great wave of misgiving swept over him. His father had never before seemed so far away, and that stern face, with its firm outlines of chin and brow, looked like the face of a stranger. He had never once before seemed in the wrong.

"How can I get my facts?" he asked, "unless I carry out the line of practical investigation you condemned a minute ago?"

They stood looking at each other in the firelight, for both had risen. The father was angry, but dispassionate ways of thinking for years leave a mental habit.

"You are right, Henry," he said coldly. "Investigate."



CHAPTER VI



THE day before Mr. Penrose's call at Gordon Heights, Annice had had the smallest trunk in the house brought to her room. It was an old-fashioned, square tin trunk, part of her mother's wedding outfit. Some of her mother's things were packed in it now. Annice sat on the floor taking them out. She had sent the maid away, and had locked the door. There was an air of excitement and of mystery about her disordered strands of hair and about her burning cheeks.

The room did not look as if it belonged to her. It was too large, too expensive, too pink. That was the colour of the carpet, of the furniture upholstered in brocade. Bureau cover and table-scarf were worked with the same shade. The high walls were bare, except for a few cheap pictures : little Samuel praying, in his night-dress ; the little girl in blue, asleep, with daisies in her hands ; the same little girl awake. In the small book-case were blue and red and green editions of Scott's poems, Moore's, Jean Ingelow's, all apparently unused. The apartment had been furnished as a surprise for Annice on her fourteenth birthday, and everything in it except the pictures had been new then. Annice clung to these. Her mother had given them to her when

she was a little girl, and the sight of them always brought back the old days.

Those old days! They had lived in a tiny frame house in the suburbs of a small, up-country town. Mr. Gordon had always been away all day long attending to business. There had been no servant, and Mrs. Gordon had trained her little daughter to help her in the housekeeping. Annice took from the trunk a long white apron that her mother had worn then in the afternoons, and hid her face in it. She saw her mother in the Boston rocker, one foot on the hearth of the small wood stove. She was darning stockings, and Annice, the little girl Annice, on a stool near by, the gray kitten curled up in her lap, was darning stockings too. Those autumn afternoons, when, by reaching out one hand she could touch her mother's gown, had stayed in her mind always as an image of warmth and comfort and home. There had been a hush when her father came home, sometimes silent and worried, sometimes beaming over a present he had brought for his wife. The kitten had to be put out, for Mr. Gordon did not like cats. Annice could see it now, shivering on the window-sill, touching the pane with its little paws and mewing piteously toward the warmth within. She dried her eyes on the soft white apron and smiled. Someway, she felt like that kitten herself now.

But this was not getting ready! Annice roused herself, folded all the worn garments in the little trunk, and put them reverently away in a box. Then she examined her wardrobe, to see if anything in it could serve her in this crisis. Last spring's green covert cloth was too conspicuous, and the pale brown tailor suit had too much of an air. Over each garment that she examined she bit her lips with vexation. Her clothes all had distinction, the girls in boarding-school had said. She wished she had a gingham dress! Suddenly the right thought struck her. She took from the farthest corner of the closet a soft black gown. Her eyes grew dim as she looked at it. It was part of the

mourning she had worn for her mother. Old-fashioned and not quite long enough, it was so much the better for her purpose.

"It will make me feel safe," she said to herself. "It belongs to her."

Guiltily, as if she were robbing the house, she stole her clothing from the bureau and packed it away in the trunk. Then she brushed her hair straight back from her face, doing away with the gracious part that softened the sternness of her forehead. She put on the black gown, pausing over the forgotten hooks and eyes, and smiling in the glass at the reflection of old-fashioned sleeves and skirt. A battered felt walking hat that she had worn at the shore, and an ulster that she had rescued the night before from the charity box downstairs, completed her costume. Would the servants think it queer? she wondered, as she rang the bell and gave orders to have the trunk taken down to the carriage. It was such a little one, she explained to the coachman as he came up for it. It could go with her just as well as not. John gave it one long critical look and shouldered it. Its battered cover looked apologetic as it came into contact with his smart livery.

Annice stopped to say good-bye to a picture of her mother that stood on her bureau in a plain gold frame.

"She wouldn't want me to do it, not just this," said the girl, sadly. "But there's no other way to find out, and I think that it's right. I'm not coming back until I know all about it, until I'm sure."

It was a dull, gray, leaden day. A blight seemed to rest on the marshes. Over all the world something was settling down like an extinguisher, shutting out air and light. The autumn leaves looked stained and dragged. Annice nestled down in the carriage cushions, looking in her sombre garb like a newly made nun. She drove away from home with a mingled sense of pain and fear and mischief. As she looked back toward the gray house on the hill a spirit of adventure possessed her, and she experienced a flash of

keen enjoyment in her escape from the shadow of those walls. But when the great towers faded from her sight, a sudden fear paralyzed her. She felt herself very small and thin and inadequate. After all, she was but a waif, a stray, and she had no place to lay her head. Her hands were clasped very tightly together, and her scarlet lips were set in stern lines. Would her father come home and find out about it? Would he care, she wondered?

"He doesn't really love me," she said, two tears running down over her pale cheeks. She had tried hard to think of something to account for her crying. "He just thinks he ought to because the Bible says so. He's — acting!"

She was ashamed to dry her eyes. What was the matter with her? That was the second time to-day, and she despised tears. Why was she so unstrung? She leaned her cheek against the cushion at her back. Yes, she was wretched. She wanted to be loved really, not biblically. She was hungry, and thirsty, and homesick, and, yes, she confessed it, she was frightened at what she was doing. To reassure herself of her safety she drew a slip of paper from her pocket and read the address: "The Merton Home for Working Girls, 19 Denman Street, North Winthrop." Annice nodded with satisfaction, and a little gleam of amusement flickered in her face. It was perfectly respectable. Her father had told her so. It was one of his Charity Organization addresses, and he had advised her to recommend it to the girls she would inevitably meet in her church charity work. She scowled a little, tried to look stern, but failed. It was hard to keep at tragic height all the time that righteous wrath against her father's wrongdoing.

Her meditation was broken by the coachman's voice.

"Station, miss!"

Would John see that her nose was red? She struggled to regain her self-possession. But John did not see. He was so busy wondering where Miss Annice was going with that forsaken little trunk that he half dropped it in getting

it out, and scratched the carriage. He looked apprehensively at his handiwork.

"He'll be angry," said John. "Where to?"

This was an emergency for which Annice was not prepared.

"Check it to New York," she said quickly, handing him her mileage book. She flushed as she did so, for dissimulation was new to her. Her head swam a little as she stood in the station, with people crowding past her, elbowing her, stepping on her feet. But she looked tall and calm and self-possessed as John came back with the check. She handed him a bill.

"See if you can have the carriage fixed before — I mean right away," she said. "And don't wait. Go home."

John reluctantly obeyed. Then Annice went to the baggage-room and asked to have the check taken off her trunk. Her heart was beating so that she wondered if those men could hear it, but nobody seemed surprised, and the girl's courage rose.

"Keep it until it is sent for," she directed. Then she walked out of the station and took a car for North Winthrop.

The city across the river was to her practically unknown. As the girl looked down the long squalid streets where factories stood, belching smoke, and where men with blackened faces sat on curbstones, eating bread and butter for their noonday meal, the shock of her first glimpse of dirt and misery stunned her. Pictures from her memory flashed between her and the sights before her: the drawing-room at Madame Von Holst's with its white marbles and its silken curtains; gay scenes on the long, curving beaches of the northern seacoast where her summers had been spent; and the soft green grass, pleasant to little bare feet, around the home where she had spent her early childhood. All these things were confused with the images before her of ragged children playing house with bits of barrel hoops and fragments of china; of dishevelled women

scolding their children or one another; of withered and piteous old faces drifting up and down the streets in the surging crowd, like dead leaves flying before the wind.

The car jolted, turned, and went rumbling down Dowden Avenue, the Bowery of North Winthrop. The black and red vistas of the factory quarter gave way to the glare of long lines of little shops, with windows full of gaudy clothing, house-furnishings, pictures. All at once Annice's heart stopped beating. A huge building on a corner, dominating the whole quarter, bore, printed high in electric burners that at night advertised it in a blaze of glittering points, the name "SMITH'S!" Annice motioned to the conductor to stop. She joined the crowd of women who were elbowing one another at the entrance. The sight of the dirty floor, of the girls with dark-ringed eyes who served as clerks, and the nauseating odour of bad air made Annice faint as she entered for the first time her father's place of business. She could not think. She could not see. She knew only that she was hot and ashamed. From this place emanated those temporal blessings for which her father daily thanked God at family prayers. This was the means through which the Giver of all good bestowed His bounty.

Smith's stood at the edge of the slum district, catching, by its cheap abominations, the hard-earned money of the poor. Its windows displayed plush albums, with shining metal corners, huge chromos in rococo gilt frames, plated jewelry, set with glass stones, wreaths of artificial flowers for home-decoration, purple, red, and villainous green, brilliant calico wrappers, and paper-soled shoes. A great deal of advertising, a great deal of cheating, the worst possible conditions for the employees, a few articles marked below cost that the many might be marked far above — this was Smith's. It brought a rich return for the money invested in it, twenty-five, forty, sometimes sixty per cent.

The proprietor's daughter walked past the counter where shoes were displayed at sixty-nine cents, gaiters at fourteen; and past the patent medicine department where

Hood's Sarsaparilla, Salvacea, Paine's Celery Compound, and the like were advertised as "going below cost." She worked her way slowly toward the corner where ready-made clothing was displayed. Here were piles of soiled and shop-worn undergarments, trimmed with coarse machine embroidery; waists of shiny silk, elaborately tucked; half-sewed, untidy calico wrappers. Annice purchased an indigo blue calico waist for twenty-nine cents. Her lip curled at the corner as she took up her parcel.

"I shall wear that as a badge," she said to herself, turning away.

The shrill remark of one of the shop-girls arrested her as she was working her way out. The speaker was giving directions to some one who had just entered.

"Applyin' for a place? Go to the boss. There he is. Mr. Smith. He owns the whole concern."

Annice watched the applicant as she approached the supposed proprietor. He gave one glance at the girl's tawdry finery, smiled a quiet, insinuating half-smile, and shook his head. He was a smooth, sleek, gentlemanly man, with a pointed beard. His face wore the complacent look that goes with successful dry-goods dealing. Annice turned away with a shiver. She was a person of swift, intuitive judgments that were usually right. A heading that she had seen in a scientific journal flashed into her mind: "Lizards that walk erect —". Perhaps her excited state of mind made her unjust to the manager of her father's establishment.

Outside the shop she asked a policeman the way to Denman Street. People, houses, passing horses swam before her eyes like things in a dream. The walk quieted her, and she began to feel in these faces an interest that was not curiosity. They were full of traces of feeling, of passion, and the girl thrilled with a sense that she understood. Something very far back in her consciousness felt at home here. There was no joy, no beauty to make her afraid. A few people looked back at the stately young lady in the

short black gown. One dirty-faced, flaxen-headed baby rushed out and clasped her skirt in two fat hands.

"Teacher, tell me a story," she said. Annice bent and patted the tangled hair.

Number 19 Denman Street was reached at last. High over the dingy door was printed: "The Merton Home for Working Girls." On the ground floor was a restaurant in whose window sat a girl baking griddle-cakes over a gas stove. The entrance to the Home was a narrow passageway on the right. Annice held her breath that the odours might not reach her, and bravely rang the bell. An untidy maid came to the door. Annice followed her, with sinking courage, up the dark stairway and into a room whose furnishings consisted of a desk and three wooden chairs. A gray-haired woman sat at the desk. Annice quailed before the glance of her shrewd blue eyes.

"You wish a bed?" she asked quietly. The fine practicality of that plain face made the girl ashamed of the quixotic part she was playing.

"A room, please," said Annice.

"We have no single rooms," said the woman. "There are six beds in each. Sit down," she added kindly, touched by the dismay in the girl's face.

Annice forgot her part. She was about to say that such an arrangement was infamous, then she remembered, and the flush that came to her face was an added disguise.

"A bed, then," she said firmly. She tried to sit awkwardly on the edge of her chair, but nature had not made her for awkwardness. As she had climbed the stairs she had taken the precaution to roll up the wrists of her gloves, thus making a gap between glove and sleeve. Would they think that she was an Irish girl, she wondered, with mischief in her eyes. To herself she looked uncouth enough to succeed.

"It is a dollar a week," said the matron, "in advance. Have you any references?"

The young impostor was not prepared for this, but she had a ready wit.

"No," she said, "but I can give you names: Mr. Gordon, of Winthrop Heights; Mrs. Appleton, 75 St. Paul Street."

The girl congratulated herself in secret. Her father would not be home for two weeks, and Mrs. Appleton was going South for two months at least.

"What is your name?" asked the woman. "And your age?"

She was making entries in a long book.

"Annice Whitney," said the girl, stopping with her middle name. "I am twenty-two," she added.

"Are you a working girl? Have you supported yourself before? Have you done any factory or shop work?"

"No," answered Annice, "but I have done housework."

She thought of the linen dish towels in that little house in the suburbs, and of the days when she had dried the dishes for her mother. They had been so clean and shining as she took them from the hot water.

"Large family or small?" the woman was asking.

"Very small," and the girl's voice choked. The matron looked at her with suspicion, but the innocent face reassured her. There was something appealing in youth and inexperience like this.

"You may stay," she said. "You should have brought letters, but you did not know. Do you want a meal ticket?"

"A meal ticket?" gasped Annice.

"You get your meals in the restaurant downstairs. We have them at a reduction, three and a half dollars' worth for a dollar seventy-five. Two seventy-five with the room."

Annice took out her purse, then tried to cover it with her hand, afraid that the monogram on the clasp would betray her. The action roused the matron's curiosity.

"How long have you been self-supporting?" she asked.

"I'm just beginning," answered the girl, with a bitterness in her tone that made her companion think she understood. It was another case of sudden loss of money. Poor child! The matron's eyes were full of pity, and she touched her young charge caressingly as she rose to conduct her to her room.

Annice was taken through a sitting-room whose floor was covered with brown ingrain carpet and whose walls were decorated with pictures of the presidents of the United States, into a long apartment where six little iron beds stood in a row. There were two iron wash-stands, with galvanized iron pitchers and wash-bowls. Diminutive towels hung at the side; ivory soap lay in queer little soap dishes on a rafter near by.

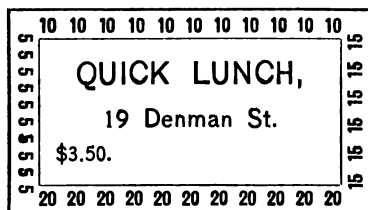
"Each girl," the matron was saying comfortingly, "has two nails for her clothes. You have a trunk, you say, at the station? I will send for it. It can go under your bed."

Annice flinched, but she said over and over to herself the dying words of that martyred Covenanter ancestor: —

"Ye can hurt my body, but ye canna get at my soul."

The matron went away, advising the new girl not to go out to look for work that afternoon. Morning was a better time. Annice, left alone, took off her hat and sat down on the edge of her bed. Two skirts, ragged at the bottom, decorated the wall opposite. A soiled velvet waist hung over her head. An agony of physical repulsion took away from her all deeper thoughts and all sense of her reason for being there. She watched it all by the dull light that came in through a single window, opening on an inner court. She, too, was turning, she felt, gray and dirt-coloured and miserable and sordid. Had she lived here all her life? She could not remember anything before this. She could not go to bed here! She could not use a "meal ticket"! Then she drew that object slowly from her pocket, looked at it and laughed a little hysterical laugh. It was horrible,

but it was funny. She examined the ascending scale of figures round the edge.



"I'll eat the five cent side first," said Annice Gordon, gravely.

The long afternoon wore on, and at six o'clock the "girls" came home. Two were waitresses in a restaurant. They were let off in the evenings, while another set went on duty. They called each other "Seven," and "Fifteen," their restaurant numbers. One was a type-writer, one a dry-goods clerk. The last was a woman of forty-five, clerk in a jeweller's shop. She wore a shiny cashmere dress, and a pair of diamond ear-rings that had been thoughtfully presented by her employers in token of their appreciation of her fifteen years of faithful service.

They were kind to Annice.

"She looks like a real nice girl," said Number Seven to Number Fifteen, and Annice was grateful. Never before had she had this overwhelming sense of being stripped of all that wealth and education had given her, and sent out into the world, a naked soul, to stand or fall by her own merits. She was glad if she was "nice." She had not hoped for so much as that. The dignified young woman whose opinion had been law for her schoolfellows at Madame Von Holst's, sat on the edge of her bed, her hands clasped in her lap, looking beseechingly toward this group of shop-girls as if pleading for approval.

It was the jeweller's clerk who invited Annice to go to supper with her. They left the other girls curling their

hair. Putting on their hats they groped their way down the dark staircase into the brilliantly lighted restaurant. The tables were crowded with men who kept their hats on while eating; with working girls dressed, with elaborate care, in black gowns trimmed with jet, silk waists corded in the latest style, or shabby dresses surmounted by wide-brimmed, multi-coloured hats. They all stared as the newcomers entered, and Annice flushed to the roots of her hair. A red-faced, white-aproned waiter dashed up to them as they took their seats.

"Set-ups for two?" he demanded. "What's your order?"

The jeweller's clerk waited for Annice.

"Toast, please," said the girl, speaking feebly.

"Now, my dear," remonstrated the older woman, "you just mustn't do that. Don't starve yourself. Use yourself well. It costs more now, but it will pay in the end. Have a good meat supper, dear. There, do. Try stew. It's real nourishin'."

The clatter of heavy knives and forks was hard to bear. The rude gaze of these men was unendurable. Annice wanted to scream, but she listened quietly to the cheerful conversation of her neighbour. A little old woman slipped in and sat down beside them.

"I want somethin' light," she said apologetically to the waiter. "I've been to dinner."

Abashed by his impatience, she hurriedly ordered tea and fried potatoes. Annice forgot her miseries in stealing glances at the woman's wrinkled face. She actually looked hungry. Her calico gown was old and her shawl frayed. Meanwhile the waiter had come back. He deposited before Annice, with a thud, a portion of gray stew with bits of carrot in it, on a pewter platter. Annice tried; she could not eat it. She wondered if this hungry neighbour who was eating fried potatoes with economical slowness would like it. To offer it would be an act too suggestive of a Sunday-school book. Annice rose and followed her

guide from the table. Looking back, she saw that her late neighbour had laid a detaining finger on the pewter platter.

"I'll just finish this," she explained to the waiter, "if you'll leave it. Thankee."

"You'll get your appetite back in a day or two," said the jeweller's clerk, as they groped their way up the dark stairway. "What did you say your name was? That's a queer name, I'll call you Annie."

In her little iron bed that night Annice grasped with rigid arms the rod at her head, stretched out her feet until they touched the cold iron at the other end, and tried to think. It was terrible, infamous. She had not dreamed that anything could be so bad. Were girls compelled to live like this, six in a room, with no bath-tubs, no privacy? She was smothering in this bad air. Then through her keen sense of hurt came a thrill of satisfaction. If these things were so, she was glad that she knew. At last she had touched something tangible, real. The old, vague, wistful sympathy exulted in the thought of possible outlet. She could help some day.

As she went to sleep, a dim consciousness came to her that the misery in the world is complex, woven of many strands. Her father could not be wholly responsible for the pewter platters, the unventilated rooms, the desolate iron beds. Her resentment against him softened. Her hair got into her eyes, was drenched, and dried on her cheeks. She dreamed of swarming streets and rotting houses, the nightmare broken by hints of remembered beauty from wood and field. The love of visible beauty which she fought back in her waking hours often conquered in sleep, and the colour and outline of fair things in nature haunted her dreams. At four-o'clock the rattling of dishes in the restaurant below wakened her, and a sickening odour of griddle-cakes floated up on the warm air. At six, a shriek from a speaking-tube roused the girls in the room, and they rose, dressed, and breakfasted. What a placard

called "A 1 coffee" was served in heavy cups with powder spoons.

Annice started out at half-past seven.

"Good success, my child," said the matron, placing her hand on the girl's shoulder. Annice looked very meek and pale.

"I've written out a little recommendation for you," said the matron; "you can get those people you referred to to sign it when you have time. Read it," and she unfolded the paper.

"I hereby certify that this young woman, Annie Whitney, is a sober, honest, worthy young woman. She has not lived in places, but she is obliging and would be faithful to any party employing her.

MARY F. DREW,

Matron of the Merton Home for Working Girls."

Annice took the papers and thanked her benefactor, whose eyes looked somewhat guilty because of this premature recommendation. But she did not look at the list of agencies that accompanied the note, for her plans were already made. When she reached the street she drew a newspaper cutting from her pocket and looked at it in triumph. It was an advertisement.

"SALESLADIES WANTED. SMITH'S."



CHAPTER VII



T was bargain day at Smith's. In the windows coarse embroidered handkerchiefs were advertised at ten cents, "*Novelties in Neckwear*" at twenty-nine, "*Smoking-jackets, to-day only,*" at ninety-eight. At the book counter, *The Bonnie Briar Bush* sold for five cents, *The Reveries of a Bachelor* for twelve. A volume of selections from Byron, through a mistake of the buyer in this department, was conspicuously displayed as *Don Juan's Works*, at nineteen cents. Downstairs in the housekeeping department pie-tins went for a penny, rolling-pins for the same, iron spoons, two for five cents.

All day crowds of women poured in at each door, fought for precedence at counters where a half-hour's hard elbowing resulted in saving two cents on a purchase, and tried to force a way out through the same entrances where the incoming throng surged and beat. Bonnets were twisted, facings torn from skirts. A woman who had bought a plaster cupid in the Art Department dropped it on the floor, and angrily listened as the heels of her fellow-customers crushed it to atoms. Only one plump arm remained after that crowd had passed. The owner picked it up, carried it home, and afterward displayed it, glued to a bit of blue plush.

"It cost only seventy-nine cents," she always remarked with pride. "The usual price is one-forty-nine."

Upstairs the untidy restaurant was filled to overflowing. Chops were served at half-price to-day; charlotte-russe and peach-shortcake at three cents each. At half-past nine in the morning women began to take their luncheon, eager to forestall their rivals. They bustled back, with crumbs about their mouths and an anxious pucker in the forehead, to hunt a bargain at some new counter. Children were dragged with them under the feet of the crowd. At noon a tragedy occurred. Mothers, anxious to make good purchases, left their babies in carriages on the sidewalk, close under the windows of the shop. A runaway horse, dashing across the street, upset one of the carriages, and plunged on, more frightened than ever. The child stopped crying, and was lifted, warm and dead, by a policeman. He held it until the mother came, listened to her angry reproaches regarding his neglect of duty, then wheeled the carriage, where the child lay, surrounded by the bundles that represented the morning's bargains, over the crowded crossing at the foot of the street.

The shop-girls toiled, patient, bewildered, their nerves strung to the point of highest tension, their feet weary with standing in pointed-toed shoes. Down the slides to the shipping department went a steady avalanche of heterogeneous articles, hair-brushes, tooth-powder, undergarments, hymn-books. Articles were recorded in the books, wrapped up with lightning dexterity, and hurled by red-faced clerks to the delivery-wagons that rattled in swift succession up to the door. The tired horses moved away with an expression that belied their red cockades and their strings of bells. Inside the shop, the little cash-girls dodged among the crowd, ran under people's arms, turned deaf ears to needless inquiries, and kept eyes and mind fixed upon the one task in hand with a concentration that ought to have been a lesson in business methods to the aimless crowd of customers. The floor-walker, his dignity somewhat upset

by the attacking army, invaded, retreated, led charge after charge, with a generalship worthy of a better cause.

At the ready-made clothing counter stood a girl, curly-haired, red-cheeked, with a look, in the gleam of the hair and the cutting of the short upper lip, bespeaking Scotch descent. She seemed to be the centre of attraction for all the employees within reach. Business was despatched with a rapidity that put her fellow-clerks to shame. She tried forty-nine-cent calico wrappers, with attenuated girdles and half-hemmed ruffles, on customer after customer, and in each case effected a sale after trying the garment on herself. The glow of life and strength about her, the curving outlines of her plump figure, lent beauty to the limp folds. She laughed, made jokes, ordered her fellows about. If customers grew angry because of delay she sent them to the refreshment counter opposite where tea and coca-cola and nervine were served gratis, then waited on them while they were still good-humoured from the use of the stimulant. Neighbouring clerks appealed to her constantly for advice. She settled disputed questions quickly, decisively, finally. Whether the decisions were right or wrong was not of so much consequence. They were immediate and final.

A pause came in her work. The woman who was looking at twenty-one-cent underwaists stopped, uncertain whether to take one or two. Mary Burns's eyes wandered to the new girl at the toy-counter. They had wandered that way very often all the morning with a protective look. There was something appealing in the new girl's slenderness and air of inexperience. She was not smartly dressed, like the others, in frayed silk waist, with a mascot tie, carrying its imitation jewel. Her calico waist and her white collar and cuffs made her attire conspicuous for its plainness.

"She looks old-fashioned," said Mary Burns to herself. "I bet she's from the country, too," and her heart warmed.

There was trouble at the toy-counter. The new girl, hurrying to deliver change, and confused in regard to difference in prices, made a mistake. To the woman who had bought a jointed doll for a quarter she gave a parcel containing a pasteboard donkey, and ten cents instead of seventy-five. The rectification of the mistake failed to diminish the woman's wrath. She was giving a harangue on cheating when she felt her arm grasped firmly, and turning, she confronted the determined face of Mary Burns.

"You've got your doll, ain't you," demanded Mary, "and you've got your change? Then kindly move on and make room for the next customer."

The woman yielded to the potent courtesy of this dismissal. The new girl looked up in gratitude.

"You're tired," said Mary Burns. "What's your name?"

"Annice Whitney," answered the new girl. Her smile, and a certain dainty graciousness of manner, riveted the other girl to the spot. "I am very grateful to you," she added.

"Stand right up to them," said Mary Burns. "Don't let them bully you."

The look of wistfulness that was struggling with an expression of amusement in the face before her struck home to the heart of Mary Burns. Her blue eyes beamed with sympathy.

"You just come to me every time," she said stoutly, starting back to her own counter. The woman took two waists. Another woman came, another, another. The day wore on. At noon Mary went up to the restaurant, and, after long waiting, got a sandwich, then came back to her post. Her feet ached, her head ached, her back ached. All day she had not been able to sit down. The look of apparent good health that struck one at first, because of the sturdy frame and rather broad cheeks, proved, at second glance, to be deceptive. There were dark rings under her eyes, hollows in her temples, and an air of

nervous exhaustion about her whole face, yet, as she had often said, she was the strongest girl in the shop.

She could not keep her eyes away from Annice Whitney. The girl looked utterly exhausted, and all the delicate colour had faded from her face. When she was not besieged by customers she stood, remote, gazing into space, with trouble in her eyes, grief lurking in the corners of her mouth. Once the gray look faded. Light flashed back into the girl's face, mischief into the dimples of her cheeks and the curves of her lips.

"If you ain't onto your job better," a woman said, "you'll lose your place. I don't know but I'll tell the boss that you've got something besides sawdust dolls to think about now."

An expression of gravity drove away the girl's smile.

"The eight-cent size, or the twelve-cent size?" she asked demurely, holding up two dolls with china heads and legs. She fumbled awkwardly with the wrapping-paper when the woman had made her choice. Goods at the toy-counter were wrapped up on the spot.

"Seems to me your fingers are all thumbs," said the owner of the twelve-cent doll, but the girl's smile subdued her.

"Would you mind wrapping it up yourself?" asked Annice, with appealing sweetness. The purchaser's anger melted.

"You don't look fit to be standin' here all day. Can't you set down?"

Annice shook her head. There was a new sternness in the lines of her mouth when she did not smile.

The piles of clothing at Mary Burns's counter were nearly exhausted. The cheap undergarments with their coarse embroidery sold at prices that exceeded only by a few cents the cost of the material alone. Yet Smith's did not run without profit to the owner, and the middlemen who secured goods for the establishment did not work without pay. Here, as is usual, those farthest down in the scale suffered

most, and the low prices of the ready-made underclothing meant starvation wages for the sewers. They represented, Heaven only knows what hours of hopeless, driving toil on the part of women driven by hunger to make shirts for thirty cents a dozen, night-dresses at a dollar a dozen, buying the thread themselves. These bargains were eagerly snatched up by wives of mechanics, comfortable on an income of twenty dollars a week; type-writers and stenographers, well-fed and well-paid; and ladies in South Winthrop who did not know what the word hunger means.

None of these considerations troubled Mary Burns, for she knew nothing of prices paid for clothing, and would have found it hard to sympathize with suffering that was not directly under her eyes. Her thoughts were divided between her sister at home and the new girl at the toy-counter. Jennie had looked more fagged than ever of late, and her work was harder for her every day. And here this Whitney girl was standing, white about the mouth, looking ready to faint at any minute. Mary Burns's forehead was wrinkled with wondering what to do. A life of hard toil had made her unconscious of any kind of pity save the compassion of muscle, and the call of need meant in her a practical desire to perform some service immediately with her hands. Gradually Annice faded from her mind, and old anxiety about her sister absorbed her, reinforced by a physical weariness that made her the helpless prey of her own thoughts. She went about her work in a mechanical fashion. Annice missed the sympathetic response of the blue Scotch eyes.

At five minutes to six, preparations for closing began. Cloths were spread over the piles of goods on the various counters. The clerks worked with nervous haste, eager for the fresh air outside, for supper. The shop-girls filed out, chattering, their sailor hats tilted to one side. Mary was putting her hat on when a voice startled her.

"Well, how did it go?"

She turned, flushing a little with vexation. A man con-

fronted her, brown-whiskered, quiet, with a subdued, gentlemanly air that would have seemed to any other girl respectful.

"Good evening, Mr. Smith," she said. "Everything is gone, except two or three wrappers. They made a dead set for my counter." She waited for him to go, but he did not move. Some of her fellow-clerks looked at her and envied this freedom of conversation with the proprietor, for the manager of Mr. Gordon's great concern was supposed on all hands to be the owner of it.

"Are you going home?" he asked. "I am going that way and will walk along with you, if you don't object."

Colour leaped to the girl's face and neck. She was pretty in her white sailor hat and plain black gown, with the red creeping over her very ears.

"I do object," she said abruptly. "I've told you that before."

She turned, rudely, and began arranging garments on the shelves behind her. The man gave her one long, non-committal look, then turned on his heel and walked away. He spoke a few words to the girl at the refreshment-counter. She appreciated the honour, and showed that she did. Mary Burns went out of the shop alone.

She walked rapidly through the crowded street, slipping between knots of slow pedestrians, hurrying over crossings in defiance of policemen, in the face of prancing horses and electric cars. Walking down the thoroughfare of the poorer part of the city she was accosted more than once by the loafers who have learned the hour when the working girls go home.

"Hurry, he's waitin'!" called one, derisively, as the girl's swift steps bore her past him. An evil-looking man ran into her, lifted his hat, apologized, and looked expectantly at her. The scorn in her eyes showed him his blunder. The clean, girlish face was full of dislike at being stared at — by the wrong people. It was full of a shrewdness that meant knowledge of the world and inno-

cence together. Just now she was thinking, in irritated scorn, of Mr. Smith. She could never convince herself of the reality of those dry-goods clerks at Smith's. To her a man was something who pitched hay and ploughed and made stone-walls. These men were like bits of mechanism, made of papier-mâché, and moved by strings. All she asked of them, she was saying to herself, was to be let alone. Why couldn't they let her alone?

A bare-headed woman sat on a door-step, holding a crying child on her knee. At a window near, a wrinkled face was bent over a dish-pan, and two old, knotted hands were wielding a dish-cloth. The sight of work with the hands always brought a guilty feeling to Mary Burns. Why was she not doing things like that? Why did she stay dressed up, behind a counter? She was half-conscious now that that sense of unreality she had in looking at dry-goods clerks extended to everything that was not connected with the touch of the soil, with the manual labour springing from it. That old smell of earth, of growing grass and mouldering leaves, that meant a world of live people, actually doing real things. This was only playing, and it was hard play, too. Meanwhile her feet carried her swiftly toward the only real thing in her life, her sister Jennie.

At Salutation Street Mary turned, and entered the door of a tenement-house. She climbed four flights of stairs in pitchy darkness. One thought and one only urged her on: to get home first and have the work done when her sister appeared. On the top floor she stopped and opened the door with a key which she had taken from her pocket. Without even removing her hat, she lighted the kerosene stove, put over it a tiny tin tea-kettle, then grasped a worn broom and proceeded to sweep. She was taking up the dirt on a bit of pasteboard that answered for a dust-pan, when her sister entered.

"That you?" said Mary. "You're early."

She had hoped to have the potatoes boiling by the time her sister came.

Jennie sank down on a chair, panting for breath. The stairs were growing harder and harder. She had stopped to rest on the third flight, leaning her forehead against the damp railing with a little sob of sheer exhaustion. She was a tiny woman, faded and pale, with an apologetic air of self-effacement. Dress, eyes, hair, were all of one neutral tint. By the side of Mary's warmth of colour, she seemed lifeless and old. The nose was pinched and colourless, and the thin lips were withered into fine wrinkles, but Mary saw none of these things. Her older sister was to her still the figure that had represented to the eyes of a six-year-old girl the glory of young womanhood, a figure clad, in the afternoons, in a clean cambric gown — attractive enough to lure to the porch of the old yellow house in the country the awkward young owner of the next farm.

"Just you lie down," said Mary, "and keep out of my way while I get supper."

She pushed her sister toward the bed in the corner. It was covered with a patchwork quilt. The coarse white pillow-cases were trimmed with rick-rack edging. Jennie yielded. She let her sister take off her hat and tuck up her feet, and a thrill of pleasure ran through her thin little frame in the delicious rest of lying down.

"I'm awful lazy," she said, conscious of yielding to the sin of luxury.

"You come by it honestly," said Mary, gayly. The girl was anxiously watching the transparent blue shadows under her sister's eyes. "You get it of your father. His was the same kind. He was lazy at hard work from sunrise to sundown, just as you are."

Supper was ready at last. Mary had made tea in the old blue china teapot that had belonged to her mother and her grandmother. The cups matched the teapot, both decorated with a picture of two lovers escaping over a blue bridge by a willow tree, from angry parents following in vain pursuit. Mary looked at her sister, then dragged the rickety table over to the bed.

"Just stay where you are and eat your supper like a lady. Here, have the other pillow. Now are you comfortable?"

The girl had uttered no word of compassion. It was the old, unspoken sympathy of willing hands and feet. The older sister's eyes opened. They looked at the girl with the expression that Filippino Lippi's madonnas have in gazing at the Christ-child. They were beautiful eyes, in spite of the faded gray of the iris, in spite of the encircling wrinkles. There was in them no desire. Mouth and eyes alike bore the look of one who for herself asked nothing, who, so far as this world is concerned, had let go. She touched shyly the curly yellow hair above her face.

"Your part was crooked," she said by way of apology. The half caress had in it all the tenderness of motherhood with none of its passion. Mary was her child, in whom the world centred. When the farm had gone for debt, and the father and mother had died within two weeks of each other, she, a woman of twenty-four, had brought the ten-year-old girl with her to the city, had worked for her, fought for her, and had conquered. Courage like that of a lioness defending her cub had nerved the timid woman to tasks too hard for her, and she had faced situations that she could never have faced for herself. The thought of that yellow head had made her brave through the dreary years of shop-work. She had grown old, and hollow-eyed, and ugly, except for the eyes that transfigured her face.

She had embarrassed herself by touching the girl's hair. Caresses were rare between the sisters. She caught sight of the table and sat up in consternation.

"Not eggs!" she exclaimed. "Ain't they two cents apiece? And potatoes, too! We can't be extravagant!"

"I got 'em for a penny," said Mary. "Maybe they ain't good."

Mary chattered through supper. She told her sister of the sales she had made, and of the advent of the new girl,

an awfully pretty girl whose name was Annice, and who looked as if she came from the country. The last word roused Jennie, who was not interested in new girls.

"Do you s'pose the old quince-bush is alive yet?" she asked. The beauty of her voice was sudden, surprising, like the beauty of her eyes. It was the voice of the spirit, clear, pure, free.

"Like as not," answered the girl. "Oh, wouldn't I like some quince preserves, thick, the kind we had when we had company! We'll make some when we go back. Did mother tell you how to put 'em up?"

"I used to put 'em up myself," said the older woman, reproachfully. "Pound for pound, and be careful not to boil 'em too long."

They sat facing each other across the buff table-cloth in the flickering light of a tallow candle. To Jennie, the brilliant colour in the young girl's cheeks and the gleams of light in her yellow hair made the whole room shine. They had finished their supper. The potatoes had been pared very close to the skin. Every thread of white of egg had been scraped from the shells, and the last crumb of their remnant of a loaf had been eaten.

"Wasn't the egg good?" said Jennie.

"Wasn't it!" answered Mary, with zeal. They both knew better. They remembered only too well the taste of the fresh white eggs that they had hunted in the barn in years gone by.

"Say," said Mary, excitedly. "How soon do you s'pose we can go back?"

"There's just ten dollars and ten cents in the bank," answered her sister.

"We could mortgage the place," suggested Mary.

A half smile, such as one sees on the faces of the dead, whose troubles are over, flickered across Jennie Burns's gray face.

"We've had enough mortgages," she said.

Hardly a day had passed since they had left the farm

without an allusion to their plan to buy it back. Mary earned three dollars a week; Jennie two and a half. Their rent was two dollars a week. Of the remaining three dollars and a half, when the price of food and of clothing for two women had been deducted, there was little left for the savings-bank. Yet they never relinquished their dream. The loneliness of country life was no bugbear to them, for they were Scotch, with passionate love for the spot of earth that had stood to them for home. They wanted the old door-stone, the old graveyard, the path through the woods to the rock-lot pasture where they had driven home the cows.

"We ain't anybody, we don't belong any place here," Jennie said suddenly. "There's no neighbours, no place of your own. Who'd lay us out if we died?"

"Shut up!" said Mary, quickly.

She rose in haste and began to clear away the dishes. Jennie tried to follow but was pushed back upon her pillow. Mary tied a gingham apron over her black gown, heated water in a little dish-pan over the kerosene stove, folded up the table-cloth and put it into the pasteboard box that served as linen closet. Jennie's eyes never left the girl. The lines about the older woman's mouth grew tense as she watched, and the slight figure in the drab muslin dress seemed to grow longer. Mary hung her dish-towel on a white cord stretched behind the stove, then came back to sit by the bed. The candle sputtered, burned almost out.

"You look to-night just the way you did when you was six years old," said Jennie.

"How was that?" the girl asked.

"You was a pretty child, with your little round face. I used to wash your face and curl your hair and send you off to school in your clean dress."

"It was gingham, like the sunbonnet," said Mary. "You made it for me and you used to do it up yourself. I remember it all."

The sunbonnet hung high on the wall, blue gingham,

with one string gone. It had been to Jennie a symbol of hope, a flag, a promise of return to her own country.

"It was blue," said Jennie, "with scallops. I was so proud of you! Before you were born I loved the cats. Then it always seemed as if you belonged to me. Mother was so busy."

"I liked it," said the girl, softly.

"I used to think you'd marry a rich man, and I'd come to live with you and we'd buy a headstone for father and mother. I feel real bad that there isn't any."

"We don't want any rich man," said Mary, stoutly. "I'm going to buy the farm back and set you up in house-keeping. I've got thirty-five cents in my pocket now." Say, do you think we'd better have the apple tree by the pump grafted with Spitzenburgs? I remember father said he wanted to. He used to like 'em. And you can make a petunia bed."

Jennie smiled. Mary's good spirits were a constant comfort. But she turned her face sadly to the wall, in her eyes the shadow of a great fear.



CHAPTER VIII



UNDER the twofold stimulus of his class-room and of his father's unexpected opposition to the inquiry that seemed to the young man imperative, Henry Worthington awakened to the most poignant intellectual life that he had ever known. The faces of his students were a challenge to his brain. Alfred Worthington's protest against his son's criticism of Mr. Gordon's gift to the university, and of the methods by which fortunes like that were made, spurred on the son to establish more firmly the grounds of his belief. Through all his thought and all his study a single word kept sounding in his ears. It was his father's harsh "Investigate."

He found in his classes relief and despair. Sometimes the terror of that opening session in Lecture Room A came back to him. For the most part it visited him at night, when the day's excitement kept him half awake. Then he saw outlined against the darkness, great panoramic visions of young men's faces. They stood out with singular distinctness. They wore, it seemed to him, an air of reproach.

Often he found it necessary to walk up and down the corridor before his lecture began, clenching his hands to raise his courage. The old bashfulness dogged him still. But once on the field of battle, all phantoms vanished.

He was not afraid of the direct gaze of those keen eyes. He ceased to care about his blunders. A class detected him one day in a mistake: he gloried in their acuteness. They asked him on another occasion some questions about the Russian tariff.

"I do not know," he answered, with unaccountable satisfaction. "Find out. Look it up. The days of the omniscient schoolmaster are over. What are you for except to search things out for yourselves?"

There was inspiration in his very shortcomings. They meant scope, opportunity, need of working on. A feeling of exultation came to him as he realized that he and these students were standing shoulder to shoulder in a common fight. Sometimes all sense of self left him, and he ceased to remember that he was there at all, in those eager discussions where steel met steel in a war of ideas. For so long a time, at least, he was identified with something larger than himself. His sense of ownership in these young minds widened existence for him. The shock of contact with them touched every day to keener life the strong individuality working its way out into power. Responsibility gave zest to his thinking. Oh, the vivid pleasure of waking in the night with a half grasp on a new idea, following it a little way, going to sleep, weary, on the trail, ready for further pursuit with waking! And the sharp sting of that fresh idealism, yearning to do, to achieve, to stamp itself on the little world about him!

It was not his own ideals that he wished to impress upon his students, he said to himself. He was endeavouring to waken them to a sharper sense of their own. In their class work as in matters of opinion they were to investigate, sift, prove for themselves, accepting no man's judgment, in the end, but their own. The doctrine his father had taught him long ago, of not living up to other people's convictions and opinions, became the key-note of the young man's work. And the weary student, with empty note-book and docile brain, gazed in despair at the tomes he must con-

sult in working out his hard problems. He was so willing to be led, so loath to start out for himself. He regretted the days of his fathers, when college work had meant taking conclusions safely from a book, or setting them down, first, second, third, fourth, from a lecturer's lips. An untoward generation has thrown upon youth a new responsibility in the very matter of learning the alphabet.

Hard on the heels of the moments full of the sense of power, came moments of pale dejection. He could do nothing, Henry said to himself at times like these, walking up and down his own room, his hands thrust into his pockets. What was he, he asked of the downcast face he saw distorted in the old-fashioned, gilt-framed mirror, that he should aspire to guide other men?

"I am not fit," he would groan, resting his elbows on the high bureau, and running his fingers through his soft brown hair. "I'm an ignorant impostor. I've got hold of a thing I can't handle. How can I wake those boys up? I'm not worthy to touch one of the rounds of a professorial chair."

The mood of failure came to him oftenest in his room, where the helplessness of his childhood seemed to linger. The great mahogany bed suggested it, as did the quaint rosebuds in the wall paper, and the pictures in oaken frames, Hermes, Apollo, and the quoit players. The professor had wished his son to be surrounded by images of youthful power and triumphant strength. These figures taunted the young man now, reminding him of his impotent babyhood and suggesting the great gulf between vision and fulfilment. His feet were not winged like those of Hermes. They stumbled and went astray.

Oh, if his father had only met in a different way that confession in regard to the work he wished to do! It was the haunting suggestion of his father, the sight or the memory of that new sadness in his face, which robbed Henry, when he was at home, of all peace. A shadow lay across the sunshine. That grieved look was

too much to bear. Should he abandon this new interest, shut his eyes to those things his conscience forbade him to approve, and settle down to the old comfort, working with his books in the light of his father's smile?

The temptation was a strong one. Not a word in regard to the disagreement had been uttered by father or son since their one discussion of the matter. Neither had forgotten it for an instant. They talked more when they were together than they had been in the habit of doing. To each the thought came with a little sense of incongruity that they were obliged, being ill at ease when silent, to engage in polite conversation now. They even avoided each other. Henry took long walks by himself, near the sea or inland among the hills. Alfred Worthington went sometimes to his laboratory in the evening, saying, apologetically, that he must consult a book left there. He took pains to leave books there now. Henry watched him with a slight sense of injury at the neglect. It had felt like that long ago when his father had looked out of the window toward the cemetery and had forgotten the child upon his knee. He was succeeding brilliantly, people said, and his father apparently did not care. He felt a loss of that encompassing love that he had taken for granted, always, thankful or thankless as the case might be. For once, the supply did not equal the demand. For once, his father's face could not answer his difficult question for him.

It was that face, with its disappointed look, that drove him on. He consulted business men in the city. He studied over trusts and monopolies, the management of the stock-market, of department-shops in Winthrop. He was on his mettle. Answering in his own mind the objections his father had urged against his present course, the reasons for going on seemed irresistible. To prove to his father's sense of logic the justice of his action; to make himself worthy of the teaching that had formed his boyhood—teaching which had said to set high the standard, to fail in the great thing rather than succeed in the small, to follow

conviction at the expense of all else; surely, Henry said to himself, this was worthy of his utmost effort. So the dispute which was robbing the elder Worthington of his energy, and taking all life from his work, became, for the younger man, an effective goad. Henry, like his father, was, in his mental processes, steady, unrelenting, crossing the ground but once. His father's eyes were his punishment and his inspiration.

His special problem defined itself slowly for him. Do what he would, he could not help thinking of the Gordon gift. He would go and investigate the notorious Smith's. That was simple, immediate, practical. He formed a cunning plan. He would go to the different counters, buy some small article at each, and then engage in casual conversation with the clerk who waited on him. In this way he could gain information at its very source. He sat, early one afternoon, at the library table, making out in his note-book a list of questions he would ask.

1. Hours of work.
2. System of fines.
3. Wages.
4. Seats for clerks during leisure hours.
5. Expenses of living.
6. Amount and disposition of fines.

He was writing them out in the firm hand which betrayed much of his individuality, when his father entered. There was a broad smile on the professor's face. He held in his hand the latest copy of *Life*. He had a joke to show to Henry.

"A lecture?" asked Alfred Worthington, as he approached the table and saw the note-book in his son's hand.

"No," answered Henry, flushing. "A memorandum."

"Going shopping?"

The father's finger was pointing out the witticism in the paper held out toward Henry.

"No," said Henry, looking steadily into his father's

eyes, but visibly embarrassed. "I am going to investigate the workings of Mr. Gordon's establishment in North Winthrop."

Life dropped to the floor. The professor turned and left the room, but not quickly enough to hide the look of disgust on his face. Henry thrust his note-book roughly into the depths of his pocket, and put his hand up over his eyes. Should he go? It hurt to see his father look like that. Why not keep silence? He rose and went toward the door, then turned back. That chair by the fire looked very comfortable, and there was a new book on the table, with uncut leaves. What would it matter if he gave it all up? His smooth white forehead puckered into a frown, and his hand moved restlessly across the back of the leather-covered easy-chair. Then suddenly the hand took hold of the leather with a grasp that left an impress of three fingers there all the afternoon. It would make so little difference, and yet, it was all the difference between faithfulness and unfaithfulness. He could not be false to his best insight. He could not be numbered among those who had made the great refusal. Henry went out slowly into the hall, put his hat on hard, and walked away. He did not turn to look at the house. For a minute he wished that the immediate manner of expressing his great conviction to the world meant some errand less grotesque than this.

He walked on, lost in thought, his head bent. Mrs. Appleton's carriage met him, but he failed to greet the lady, not knowing that she was there. Mrs. Appleton remarked to the companion who was going to the station to see her off for Florida, that Henry Worthington looked like a young Cæsar, and acted like a bear-cub. Henry went serenely on. He saw little and heard nothing until he found himself inside the door of Smith's. He had discovered the whereabouts of the place before. He was absent-mindedly studying his memorandum book when a sharp voice asked him what he wanted.

"Pins," he answered promptly.

"Black or white?"

He did not care.

The girl at the notion counter looked contemptuously at him and waited.

"Black," he said hastily.

"English or American?"

The young economist held that Americans should buy home wares, and he chose the latter, ignorant of the fact that both the English and the American pins had been made in the same New-Jersey factory. As he waited he approached the girl with a question. She was a Jewess, black-haired, black-eyed. She looked at him with suspicion as he asked her in kindly fashion about her hours of work.

"We don't want no reporters round here," she said savagely. "I s'pose you is doin' a Sunday-paper article, and you'll put our names in and call it: 'White Slaves; Oppression of the Working Girl!' and then we'll lose our places. How many hours a day do I work? I work as many as I please."

She winked at the girl next her. The wounded knight-errant moved slowly away. He did not know that the Jewess was smarting from a well-meant, philanthropic wrong such as she had described.

"Tell him to come back after his pins," said the clerk to a cash-girl.

He came back. He was glad his father was not there.

This was hard, but Henry was an obstinate young man. His resolution to carry out his purpose grew firmer. He looked down a line of counters, meditating, then stared at one near by. It was covered with white aprons.

"Did you want anything in our line, sir?" asked the girl behind the counter. She was a girl with unabashed eyes, and bleached yellow hair. She nudged another girl as she spoke. Both giggled. A little girl with two long braids was coming toward him. He stopped her.

"Are you busy?" he asked.

"Yes," said the child.

"Haven't you time to answer a question?"

"No, sir."

"Are you a cash-girl?"

"No," she answered, surprised at his ignorance, "I'm a bundler." And she left him.

Henry looked ignominiously for the door. It had disappeared. Nothing but an entrance to the yawning basement suggested a way of escape. He was grieved. Once, in his economic investigations, he had visited an orphan-asylum in the country. Thirty or forty children had crowded round him in the matron's absence, and had begged him to take them away. He had thrilled with pity at the sight of the bare feet, the tangled hair, the pleading, childish faces. Someway, he had half expected that it would be like that when he came to Smith's, and the coldness of his reception daunted him. He seemed to be unnecessary. He was even in the way.

Suddenly his eyes lighted on a girl who looked different from the rest. She stood at the toy-counter, gazing out, beyond the things that confronted her, at something the others did not see. She was very pretty. Smooth brown hair was brushed straight back from her low forehead, leaving a wavering, undecided, bewitching line. Even the hideous blue calico waist she wore could not spoil the faint pink colouring of her cheeks. The scarlet lips kept quivering into sensitive curves. Henry eyed her carefully. She must be different. She was so much more plainly dressed than the others. And she looked so sad! Hers was the only face that showed a consciousness of the tragedy of her lot.

He approached.

"I want," he hesitated. What did he want? What had he played with when he was a child? Toys swam before him. The girl's eyelids were lifted now, and her eyes sparkled at his confusion with a mischief that belied the gravity of her face.

"A woolly lamb," he demanded.

Three different sizes were presented to him ; twenty-five cents, thirty cents, fifty cents.

He delayed. This girl was courteous. Here was his opportunity. And yet, questions now seemed impertinent.

"This is an appropriate gift for a child?" he asked.

"How old is the child?"

"Eight."

Henry did not dare look at her. He could think of no child, on the spur of the moment, except his young friend next door in Lancaster Place. He knew that he had made a blunder.

"That is a rather youthful gift for a boy of eight," the girl was saying, in a very business-like way. "Would a book be better?"

He stole a look at her. What a perfect manner she had! He thrilled with pride for his country. Nowhere else could one find working girls who were ladies. Elsewhere they might be pretty — not so pretty as she was — but a vulgar something, a desire to attract, spoiled the whole. This girl had the dignity of a queen's daughter. He wondered at the slenderness of her hands. She was looking away from him.

Might he ask her a question about the conditions of work here? he inquired, deferentially.

"Certainly," said the girl, with one quick, surprised glance at him.

Henry apologized and explained. His father would have been quite satisfied with his son's manners at the present time. He was working up certain phases of industrial conditions in the city, he said. Some points had to be investigated in a practical way. If he asked anything she would rather not answer, would she please tell him so at once?

The girl bowed, in silence.

What were the hours?

"From eight to six."

The rest at noon?

"Half an hour."

The range of wages?

"I haven't been able to discover," said the girl, eagerly. "The clerks seem afraid of questions. They go down as far as a dollar a week for the cash-girls," she said sadly. Then she looked up, caught Henry's intent gaze, and flushed with vexation. She too had made a blunder.

"I have two dollars a week," she added. "I am a beginner."

Was it hard work?

"Very." Her lips trembled a little. This questioning came near home. Conditions of work at Smith's were her shame. Yet she watched this probing into things with a feeling of thankfulness. A momentary sense of shifting the burden of the world to this young man's shoulders brought her relief.

Were clerks allowed to sit down when they were not busy?

The girl's lips curled.

"Chairs are provided," she answered quietly. "The law requires it. But we are fined if we use them. The law has not grasped that."

The old chivalric longing to deliver damsels in distress did not die with the knights of Arthur's court. Henry Worthington, as he stood by the toy-counter, vowed himself to the deliverance of the working girl. For delicate women to stand on their feet from eight in the morning until six at night, even until eleven o'clock on special days, was condemnation enough for any system. The slight hollows in this girl's temples cried out against Smith's. Henry had mistaken the quiver of her lips for self-pity, and his manhood had risen in response. He thought of his father with an actual sense of irritation. For once his father was wrong.

"For the first time," said Henry, "in a moral question."

He lingered, with his package in his hand. He had

compromised on a pair of horse-lines, not daring to tell this young woman who had made the suggestion that his friend was a little girl. A customer approached, leading by the hand a chubby four-year-old boy.

"He wants a cart," said the mother. She was a plain-faced, plump country woman, in a worn alpaca gown.

"Wid weels!" said the child, smacking his lips volitionally.

The cart was found, resplendent with red tongue and yellow box.

"It's a dollar and a half," said the clerk.

The woman flushed and turned away.

"Come, Jimmie," she said; "we'll find another cart."

The child burst into a roar so loud, so deep, so mature, so beyond the power of his four years, that Henry Worthington jumped, startled out of his train of thought.

"I ain't got but a dollar," whispered the customer, apologetically. "I'll see if I can't find a cheaper one."

The economist waked up. He looked hesitatingly at the girl behind the counter. The child, gazing at the gorgeous cart, roared on.

"Could you, would you permit me to pay the difference for the little lad?" said Henry. "I know all about it. I've been there myself."

The girl had drawn a little gold-mounted purse from her pocket.

"Let me," she said.

"Let me," said Henry Worthington.

They stood looking at each other for a minute, while the woman, bending over the child, failed to see what they were doing.

"It is my privilege, as a man," said Henry, masterfully, and the girl yielded, meekly holding out her hand for the coin.

"I can let you have the cart for a dollar," said the clerk at the toy-counter, looking guilty from her consciousness of deceit. Then she gazed at her customer beseechingly.

"Would the little boy be willing to take it as it is, without having it done up?" she asked, looking helplessly at the rolls of wrapping-paper.

"All the better," said the woman, happy in her bargain, and the baby trundled his cart away, blissfully dragging it between people's ankles, tripping up angry customers at Smith's.

Henry was thanking the girl for the service she had done him, apologizing for troubling her.

"I am interested in those things myself," she said, looking at him with her marvellous, changing eyes. "I wish I could have been of more use. I have not been here long enough to be very well informed."

"How long?"

"Only two days."

Might he ask if she had done just this kind of work before?

"That," she answered with severity, "can hardly help your investigation."

He apologized humbly.

"I was merely wondering," he explained, "whether previous experience had put you into possession of any of the facts I wish to know."

The girl relented.

"It is very difficult," she said, "to get possession of any facts. Questions rouse suspicion. I presume that it is easier for outsiders to find out about things. I may lose my position if I talk too much, and I hardly know where to begin."

The young man's keen gaze made her uncomfortable. She pointed toward the counter of ready-made clothing.

"How can I find out about those things?" she asked.

"You can't," said the young man, briefly. "I've tried. Take those waists. Nobody knows where they were made. The shop gets them from a contractor. The contractor gets them presumably from sweater-shops. They are sold at outrageously low prices, and of course the workers are

cheated, for the middleman must have his profit. But you simply can't trace the special garment back to the special hole where it was made."

"Then one person isn't responsible for it all?" asked the girl, earnestly. She was pleading her father's cause as before a judge, and the eyes that rested on him were the eyes of a hurt child. They were critical, too, as if searching the world for something to trust. The young man's expression betrayed an interest in her rather than in her question, and the light died out of her face like a little flame. She turned to a customer.

He waited, stupidly, and watched her. Were all working girls so intelligent? Her interest in this problem seemed more vital than his. Her information was certainly more complete. Probably she belonged to a union. He had heard that the unions had had great influence in broadening the outlook of working girls. He would wait and ask her a few more questions. It was his duty.

He resented the customer. She had aggressive, coarse, gray hair. He did not like the way in which she talked to the girl at the toy-counter. Now she had gone, but the girl did not come back. She stood, with her profile toward him, looking away. She probably came, poor child, from some poverty-stricken home, and this delicate beauty had been bequeathed to her by an overworked mother.

Still she ignored his existence. It was hard for a young person of importance like himself. His students did not treat him in that way, he said to himself, and he was almost angry, as he waited, standing. She did not look. Presently he advanced toward her, the lamb in his hand.

"I want that, please," he said, with an injured air.

"Pardon me," said the girl, simply. "I thought you decided not to take it. Do you wish to have it delivered? Fifty cents."

Henry walked to the door with an overwhelming conviction that this line of investigation was the right one for him to follow.

The girl at the toy-counter did not watch him. She did not smile, but there was a queer little quiver in her under lip. This present tragedy had comic moments. She drew a great sigh and said under her breath:—

“I wish that things didn’t seem so funny to me sometimes.”

Her eyelids were held resolutely down over her dancing eyes.



CHAPTER IX

“I cannot but remember such things were
That were most precious to me.” *Macbeth.*



HE conversation that Henry and his father had begun at their own door overlapped their walk. Now they were pacing up and down under the maples that bordered the driveway of Benedict Warren's ancestral home. The light of the stars was fading in the light of the autumn moon that rose slowly over the hill toward the east. Alfred Worthington lingered out of doors for the beauty of branch and twig in moonlight and in shadow, and for the pleasure of Henry's company. He was in haste, too. There was much to say to his crony, for the conversation at Mrs. Appleton's concerning the footprints in the stone had started a long train of thought that had been going on ever since. Warren was altogether too much of a free-lance in the world of thought. The professor was intolerant of easily held theories and opinions and demanded that a man's beliefs should be proved and tried in thought, study, act. A reproof was ready for his friend. Yet he delayed in sending Henry back. The pleasure caused by the boy's offer to escort him revealed to the professor how much he had felt the lack of similar attentions in the last few weeks.

He asked Henry the result of his visit to Smith's, trying hard to overcome his repugnance to the topic.

"Did you find things as bad as you had expected?" he inquired.

Henry hesitated. The vision of a girl's face, pale, with slight hollows at the temples, outlined itself in the darkness. It seemed to plead for all girls in all similar places.

"Worse," he answered briefly. "Of course I haven't had time to do anything except make a beginning. I found a young man in the shipping-department who could answer my questions intelligently. I've seen enough and heard enough to know that the owner of that place is guilty of sins as grave as outright lying and outright stealing. The shop is slow murder for half the people employed."

Alfred Worthington watched with pride the boy's face, alive with inward fire. It was possible even to admire the mistaken enthusiasms of youth.

"Granting that your charges are true," said the father, gravely, "can you refuse a repentant human being a chance to atone for old wrong-doing by present endeavour to do good? In Europe church and university have received penitence-money from the Middle Ages down, and so have extended forgiveness to the sinner."

"There have been a great many abuses handed down in Europe from the Middle Ages that we don't want to see transplanted to our virgin soil," answered Henry, grimly, touching the turf with his foot. "And it isn't a case of repentance. It's a case of a man who wants to be countenanced in further wrong-doing."

"But, Henry," pleaded the father, "you cannot be an iconoclast like that. For every conscientious man to do as you say would undermine society."

"That's a sad confession, sir," said Henry, turning a pair of exultant eyes upon his father. "Then you do agree with me a little. If society is rotten and corrupt, it ought to be undermined. But I don't advocate anything

of the kind. All I ask is for people with consciences to set a standard by refusing to have anything to do with money obtained by unfair means."

The two men had stopped. They were facing each other in the gateway.

"You and I, my son," said the older man, gently, "do not earn the money given to our university, and are not responsible for it. We work with our brains for our *alma mater*. That is our task."

"But if we accept that money we do produce it," answered Henry, eagerly. "It will continue to be earned in that way so long as it is approved by the people in our position. One of our best economists holds that the buyer of sweater-made clothing is really the producer of that class of work. So the consumer of dishonest money is really responsible for its existence."

The term "sweater-made" jarred unpleasantly on the professor's ears. This constant intrusion of vulgar practicalities into the scholar's mind was irritating. The days that had passed had made him more and more unable to understand this impertinent interference with other people's affairs that Henry called sociology. To him it seemed that the boy's mind was being drawn away from close attention to the subject he was teaching. That his son should begin to dabble in things in general was a thought too painful for the professor to follow to its consequences. Deeper than the hurt to intellect was the hurt to honour, now that Henry was about to make a personal matter of the whole thing and look up Gordon's business record.

"If you persist," said the father, starting slowly toward the house, "I shall consider it my duty to warn Gordon of what you are doing. The whole thing seems underhanded to me. You must have found some code of honour that your grandfather did not know."

"Father," protested Henry, grinding the gravel with his heel in his young indignation. "You are utterly unjust to me. It is the first time, I own, in twenty-six years.

You don't see that I am simply carrying out your teaching. It is a matter of conscience. The thing isn't any less disagreeable to me than it is to you. It is simply a duty that can't be shirked, in honour. Doesn't Winthrop's honour rest with us?"

He squared his shoulders. His own responsibility was dear to him.

"Then you are going on?"

"There is nothing else to do," said Henry, doggedly.

They parted at the doorstep without another word. The father laid his hand on the boy's shoulder before Henry turned to go. Then Professor Worthington lifted the great knocker, and the next minute he had forgotten his perplexities in Benedict Warren's presence. The latter had been walking up and down the hall in slow impatience, smoking.

They went into the den. It had been the parlour in the time of Warren's grandmother. Now it was carpetless and almost devoid of furniture. There was a stone fireplace covering half of one side of the room. In front of it was stretched Ulysses. Two or three fishing-rods hung on the wall, a gun above the door. An enormous square table with claw feet stood in the centre of the room. Tall book-cases occupied one wall space, filled with German philosophy, French essays, seventeenth-century English prose, and "The Sacred Books of the East." They bore witness to the vagrant mind of their owner, for Warren in his tastes was intensely personal and one-sided.

"What do I want to know all that for?" he had protested once when Worthington had remonstrated against the narrowness of his tastes, pleading for a more rounded view of things. "That's all good enough information, but it doesn't belong to me. I'm not interested in it. I tell you, it's a great thing for a man to know what he really cares about and to stick to it. Some people can't tell the difference between their own tastes and other people's. My commandment is, 'Thou shalt not steal

thy Neighbour's fact.' Now the world's full of things I don't want to know about. I'm not responsible for the whole universe. You spend more time in finding out a thing that isn't worth knowing — ”

“And you,” retorted his friend, “take more trouble to avoid learning a thing that you really ought to know than it would cost you to find it out seven times over.”

To-night the host brought out the chess-board in silence, and took from the table drawer a set of beautifully carved ivory chessmen. From eight until nearly eleven o'clock the two men played—a single game. They were well matched. Warren eyed his guest, furtively. It seemed to him that Worthington was letting himself be beaten.

“Checkmate!” said Benedict Warren, at five minutes before eleven. The guest gave a sigh of relief.

Warren rose and brought a chafing-dish from a closet in the wall. With cheese, beer, and red pepper he concocted a Welsh rabbit. Worthington was made to toast crackers over the coals in the fireplace. On one corner of the table Warren placed two plates, a bottle, and two tiny glasses; then he served the rabbit. The feast was ready.

“Well,” said Warren, “what's the matter?”

His friend did not answer. The host wielded his fork in silence and nibbled a cracker. The guest studied the coals.

“If you've done anything you're ashamed of you may as well out with it,” Warren resumed, smiling. “It probably wouldn't trouble my conscience so much as it does yours. Mine's tough.”

Professor Worthington waited and considered. Warren was wondering if it was hard work that kept Alfred looking so young and fresh. Presently the guest lifted his eyes to meet those of his friend.

“It's the boy,” he said.

Warren's jaw dropped. He had never heard that complaint. His eyes retreated farther and farther into their

caverns as Worthington set forth the trouble of the last four days.

"What shall I do?" he asked, in finishing.

"Give him a top to spin," said Warren, taking up his neglected pipe. "It's all child's play. It won't last more than a week."

The task of learning of Henry's existence when the latter was a baby had been hard for Warren. This thing-in-long-dresses that had come to divide Worthington's attention with him was a sore trial. To Alfred's wife, after a short struggle, he had become reconciled, but this pulpy creature that at times absorbed the whole of his friend, warped his mind, took him out on new roads of thinking, this was a different matter. How a rational creature could waste good energy over anything like that, as Worthington had done when Henry had had the croup, was a puzzle. It could not play chess; it could not take walks; it could not talk politics: Benedict Warren had been unable to see its fascinations.

But Henry's existence as a baby had at last been stamped on Warren's mind indelibly, and there he had remained, a baby. Sometimes the child grew up as far as kilts, never farther. That this creature should be now a source of serious discomfort to his friend was incredible, yet he saw looming up before him a possibility of being asked for advice. He must deploy, while collecting his forces.

"Worthington," he said, smiling, with his pipe still in his mouth—it was his great feat—"Do you remember the day when you and I went out and sat on the hill where Gordon's is now, and made a vow never to marry?"

"Yes," said Worthington.

"It wasn't a month," continued the speaker, immediately, "before you told me that you were engaged."

The professor smiled.

"It was I who proposed that vow, I believe."

"So much the worse," said the host.

"The result was natural enough," remarked the guest.

"That's not logic," observed the host.

"It's life," said Worthington. "I presume I was beginning to be alarmed when I made that proposition, and the inevitable happened."

Warren shook his head.

This memory roused old trains of thought, brought back pictures of the days when they had played together in knickerbockers, on the common; of their student life, when they had walked side by side in cap and gown. It was the friendship of a lifetime that stretched behind them. Now they turned the old corners once more, walked the old paths, sat on the old stiles.

"We must make the most of it, Worthington," said Benedict Warren, at last, with a grave, spasmodic quiver in his chin. There was a solemnity in his voice that startled his friend. Warren had never said anything like that before.

"It can't go on forever. We've got a few years, and then you'll be under one knot of grass in the cemetery and I under another, and that's the end. We must make the most of the days that are left."

"How do you know that that is the end?" demanded Alfred Worthington.

Benedict Warren took his pipe from his mouth.

"Common sense," he remarked briefly.

"There's the unscientific temper again," protested Alfred Worthington. "You are arrogant. You assume knowledge of the things we cannot know."

"Well?" said his friend, inquiringly.

"I don't make *a priori* judgments about the world of phenomena," said the scientist. "Why should I about the world of noumena?"

"That's a word," observed the host, with a smile, "that I've been trying for twenty years to avoid looking up in the dictionary. I knew you'd drive me to it some day. Say on. I'm waiting and listening."

But Alfred Worthington was not in a humorous mood.

The remark about the cemetery had made him think of a grave already there.

"Outside the realm of the demonstrable," he murmured, watching the leaping flame of the fire over the blackened wood, "who can say what may be true? Even our hopes, even our hopes."

Through all their conversation Benedict Warren was nerving himself for a supreme effort. In the atrophy of social power of a man who had shirked the duties of neighbour and citizen, one side, and one only, had kept vitality, that which was turned toward his friend. "A practical agnostic in most matters," as he called himself, "hopelessly lazy," as Worthington translated it, he would have hewn wood and drawn water for Alfred. Now—he was going to give Henry a piece of advice. He had never in his life given advice to anybody, but a friend was a friend. At any cost—

He went out on the doorstep to bid farewell to his guest. They did not shake hands. They had not done that for twenty years. The host stood, a silhouette against the light in the doorway. Professor Worthington called "Good night" and disappeared. Then Warren went back to his den, woke Ulysses, stroked the dog's head as it lay in his lap, and thought.

The professor went home in the clear moonlight, passing under the shadows of the trees and out again. Lancaster Place was quiet when he reached it. He went briskly up the walk toward his own door, when suddenly the sight of the hemlock sharply outlined against the white of the house arrested him. It was here that he had stood that night when Henry was born. Outline and shadow, the smell of the damp earth, the quiet, recreated that hour for him.

He had heard his child's first cry on that summer night, and had waited, he did not know how long, until they brought the boy to him. He had lifted his son, and a sudden sharp, exquisite pain had shot through him. The

nurse had taken the baby, and he had rushed from the house to stand still under the stars. The professor bowed his head now in memory of that hour.

For then, as his hands had reached out to touch the rough bark of that hemlock, and he had felt the cool, soft grass under his feet, a sudden sense of his unity with Nature's life had come to him. For the first time he was at home in the universe. He belonged to earth, and a passionate wish to stay took possession of him, to live on, linked with all life. The appeal in that tiny hand reached down into the roots of being. The child was his, was he. It was the sob in his throat, the blood in his pulses, the encompassing air. Looking up through the solemn hemlock branches, he had begun to know what it all meant — existence, in this world that seemed newly created, as if for his new-born child.

Just before morning had broken, on that same night, Alfred Worthington had come out again to stand hopelessly leaning against one of the pillars of the porch. Eleanor was dead. He could not realize what they had meant when they had said that. He had stood there, gazing stupidly at the faint flush of red in the east. There had been a queer, jerky feeling about his heart. He had not been sorry when, later that day, the doctor had told him of diseased heart-action, and had said that life might end suddenly for him.

Pity for that far-off hour dimmed now the professor's eyes. He sat down on the doorstep and let the slow procession of old days file past him. The moonlight touched into distinctness the lines of his forehead and mouth. It was a good face, strong and gentle, the face of a man who had loved and suffered, and was therefore fit to begin to be a scholar.

At first he had not wanted to see the baby. When, the day after its mother's funeral, it had been brought to him, he had lifted it, afraid of the feeling of tenderness that had rushed over him. Had he taken sorrow again to his heart

with the child? After that, he had been unwilling to have his son out of his sight. The cradle had stood in the library during the hours when he was at home. He had missed with an agony of longing that little brown head when it was not near. There his life centred, the trust of it, the hope of it. It was like a new pulse beating outside him.

Gradually an insistent thought had taken possession of him. He began to understand the look that his wife's eyes used to wear. Had she felt at all like this about him? Those eyes had followed him when he had gone away, had watched his coming back. He had meant all this to her, all that the child was coming to mean to him, but he had not known. He had sinned against her, unaware that love like this could exist. Perhaps it was because he was so strong that nothing had roused him fully until this appeal of utter helplessness had come. So he had crept slowly into an understanding of the past, into pity for Eleanor, for himself. He walked backward in his journey through the world. While the grass was growing green over his wife's grave, Professor Worthington began his married life alone.

For a queer, imaginative existence was carried on in this scientific mind. Not to thought only, almost to sense, Eleanor was still there. He had never spoken of it, even to Henry, but he had felt at times the lingering touch of her fingers on his hair. They had called him sceptic in the years before. They said now that his wife's death had changed him. It was not that. He had learned eternity elsewhere. It was the sight of his child's tiny face that had given him a sense of everlastingness in things, and had made him know love, creative, undying love that knows no meaning in the words "death" and "change."

The love wherewith his wife had followed him had gone into the professor's passion for the little lad. It had gathered into itself all his old aspiration. It had turned the breath on his lips into prayer. There was in it no selfish-

ness, no demand. As he stroked the baby's cheek clumsily, a sense of encompassing greatness would sweep over him, and the word "eternal" kept ringing in his ears.

"Lo ! what am I to love, the Lord of all ?
One murmuring shell he gathers from the sand,
One little heart-flame sheltered in his hand.
Yet through thine eyes he grants me clearest call,
And veriest touch of hours primordial
That any hour-girt life may understand."

Alfred Worthington heard the town-clock strike two. By that time he had reached in his review of life Henry's declaration of independence. At twelve, the child, deciding that he needed a new suit of clothes, had insisted on going alone to order them of his father's tailor. He had made a wise selection, and his father had praised him. But the iron had entered the professor's soul. Long before this he had been seen looking wistfully from his own tall boy down the street toward little lads in kilts. The fading helplessness had been hard to bear. In those early days it had never occurred to him that Henry would grow up and cease to need the strength of his father's arm. That training of his son toward independence in act and in conviction had been the hardest struggle in the father's life.

The professor awakened with a start to a consciousness of their present dispute. The idea struck him, as did everything connected with Henry, with paralyzing force. Something in the very springs of being was touched when the boy was in question. Nothing until now had broken their perfect understanding. The father in thinking it over wondered at the peace of all those years. Nothing had had to be explained. Now, it was so little a thing that had disturbed them, little, but important. Ripples are always out of proportion to the size of the stone ! The father would have found it easy to forgive his son a sin. It was harder to forgive him an ideal which he did not share.

"Yet it is a question of conscience," said Alfred Worthington, to himself. "As such, it must be faced. I wish it had been any other question under the sun."

The boy had struck his father's weakest spot. Dearest to the professor's heart, after wife, child, and friend, were his city, his university. That any one should criticise either seemed incredible. Here, here in the spot where grandfather and great-grandfather had lived out their honoured and respected lives, his son was starting out in a course that not only betrayed bad taste, but would probably end in family disgrace. For the first time in all these years the father was thinking of himself first.

He heard Henry's footsteps inside. The boy was wandering uneasily about the house, wondering when his father was coming back. That step, heard in the distance even, always gave Alfred Worthington a feeling of peace. To-night, as it died away, it brought a sharp foreboding, a sense of the inevitable separation that must come some day. For him much of the journey was done, but the boy's path lay ahead. This old feeling of paralysis that had come to him first on that night of sorrow always made him aware, in the minutes of great emotion when it came back, that he was in the side of life leading down hill to quiet. Life was fulfilled for him in his son, but he was jealous of the years that Henry would live after he was dead. He would gladly have forfeited his experience if he could only have gone back to stay with his child, protect him. Dim fears of the struggles that the future held for the boy clouded his eyes. He wondered if God feels that inability to aid, that anguish of helplessness which is the supreme test of fatherhood, its Calvary.

The door opened suddenly. Henry came out in hat and overcoat. He jumped in surprise at seeing his father.

"What in the world are you sitting out here at this time of night for?" demanded the son, with sternness. "You will have rheumatism or pneumonia. I was just starting out to look you up. Come in, sir, and go to bed."



CHAPTER X



“DON'T you love pistache?” asked the girl at her side.

Annice turned, bewildered. She had no time for dissimulation.

“No,” she answered. “I am afraid I don't. It has an unpleasant colour. But I do like meringue,” she hastened to add, seeing the disappointed look in her questioner's face. Her smile won forgiveness for her. She had found the way with surprising quickness to the hearts of these girls. They cared for her beauty, for her sweetness of manner, for the sympathy in the eyes whose seriousness was enlivened by gleams of fun. They felt her inexperience and were good to her.

“You could be real stylish if you knew how to dress, Annice,” one of them had said to her one day. “You'd better get a new waist. Nobody wears polka dots now.”

Annice had ventured for the first time into the room where the girls ate their luncheons. Some of them patronized the restaurant on the fourth floor. The majority of them economized by bringing the noonday meal—a bit of bread, a doughnut, perhaps an apple and a cracker. The only place provided for the repast was this den in the basement. It was windowless and unventilated. Two flickering gas flames exhausted still further the already

exhausted air. Foul odours crept in through the door. Sometimes rats crawled stealthily among the dry-goods boxes that served for seats. The sight of the dirt and the touch of the vile air made Annice faint, and everything swam before her—the group of chattering girls with the background of cobweb drapery in the flickering light and shadow. Then she came to her senses. The Jewess had grasped her arm and was leading her to a seat on a box.

“You’ll get used to it, bimeby,” said the girl. “Got your lunch? Nothing? Take half of mine.”

She thrust into Annice’s hand one of the two hard rolls that she had been holding in rather grimy fingers.

“Thank you very much,” said Annice. “Here, I cannot take it all.” She broke the roll into two bits and gave back one. Then with a dangerous feeling of physical misgiving in her throat she tried to nibble the other. She could not hurt her benefactor’s feelings. Fortunately the Jewess turned away, and Annice dropped the roll in crumbs on the floor, with a feeling of gratefulness for the rats.

“She don’t like pistache,” the girl who had first spoken to Annice was saying. “I think it’s just lovely.”

“What I like,” the listener responded, “is chocolate, with whipped cream.”

Annice leaned her head against the dusty wall and watched these girls. Their faces looked paler than ever in this unreal light. Their brilliant magenta and purple bows of ribbon stood out with ghastly distinctness. They were talking about their food, the fashions, their friends of the other sex, their various small importances. It was always like that. The deepest pathos in this life of hard work was the apparent lack of sense of anything beyond the present moment. Why should there be? the proprietor’s daughter asked herself sadly. They lived in a land where the golden calf was worshipped, and their thoughts of beauty and excellence were dominated by the thoughts of their superiors, those higher in the favour of the golden calf.

Annice closed her hands tightly together. She did that often in those days to keep her self-control. She felt the few hard crumbs of the roll that her Jewish neighbour had given her still clinging to her fingers, and she smiled. That saved it all from vulgarity, that quick, instantaneous, elemental kindness that she met everywhere. No service was too hard for these tired girls to perform for one another. She had seen one of them doing another's work all day, as well as her own, that the girl thus relieved might have time to go to her mother's funeral. She knew of another who, twice that week, had watched all night with a sick neighbour, and had worked all day afterward. That anæmic girl who liked chocolate with whipped cream, and who was now eating a crust of bread with a pickle, was supporting a crippled father and an invalid sister with heroism of which she was utterly unconscious. After all, these visions of dainty food and of beautiful clothes that came to them over their pitiful luncheons showed a kind of idealism better than sheer stolidity.

She rose and stole noiselessly away. The broken swinging door closed softly behind her. Through the dark and slimy passageway leading to the hardware department she groped with hands that shrank back from the objects she sought for guidance. She was thinking of the defective taste, the defective moral standards of some of those girls in the luncheon-room, but more of their quick sympathy and generous impulses.

"I've learned something anyway," said Annice Gordon. "Goodness like that is something to believe in."

The days of hard work that had passed so swiftly had brought Annice no new insight into the right and the wrong of things. She had prayed for light. She got only confusion. A clear understanding of the extent of her father's wrong-doing would lead her, she had thought, to her duty. Now her father's sin seemed inextricably mixed up with the sin of all the world. In the long list of wrong-doers who were responsible for the suffering of

those lowest in the scale, there was no one to whom she could point saying, "You are the sinner." Owner, superintendent, contractor, and the people who came to buy, seemed leagued together, all guilty, and all working in obedience to some innate wrong in the laws of trade.

Meanwhile, the hard life about her was leading her from her own spiritual problem into new lines of thought concerning social right and wrong. She had not found just the sensational misery that she had pictured from her cousin Alec's reports. It was a harder kind, with a singular lack of climax in it — the long, slow, monotonous pathos of lives that had no great hope in them, and no consciousness of lack. Wrinkles, fading eyes, a gradual letting go, through physical atrophy, of a hold on the world of warmth and light and colour — this was the heritage of hard-worked women everywhere, the peculiar, swift reward of unremitting toil. The realization of all that grinding poverty means brought into Annice's face a look that deepened the old wistful beauty of expression.

There was one more brief interview with the young economist. His manner was very different on this occasion. He was master of the situation. He had come to make a single inquiry about the disposition of fines. Were they turned into a fund for the benefit of the employees? he asked. And were they very great?

"There is no fund," Annice answered, "and the fines are rather severe. Last week that child," she pointed to a red-haired cash-girl who was galloping past in answer to a sharp call from behind a counter, "was fined a dollar. She earns a dollar and a quarter a week."

A scowl was her only reply. The young man turned to go. A feeling of helplessness and of disappointment surged through the girl. This man, who knew, who could help — why should he desert her?

"Tell me, whose fault is it?" she asked. "Couldn't any body manage a shop of this kind and be honest?"

It was a peculiar question. The stranger gave her a surprised glance from his gray eyes.

"A man *could*," he answered, "but this man doesn't. Perhaps he obeys the letter of the law, but —"

"But he isn't quite responsible for it all," pleaded the girl.

"He is absolutely responsible for conditions under this roof," said the young man, "and those conditions are as bad in every respect as they could possibly be: low wages, extra work without extra pay, unsanitary arrangements, atrocious fines. Moreover, he is responsible, though I doubt if any manager would admit it, for the way in which goods sold here are produced. Did you try, as I suggested, to trace any of those ready-made garments?"

He was puzzled by this girl. He was also eager to go, though more eager to stay. People would misinterpret the interview, he reflected, and in that he was right. The saleswomen near were looking on in curiosity.

"I tried," the girl was saying. "I asked where some of those shirt-waists were made. The clerk said: 'I don't know and I don't care. They are a bargain.' I asked the buyer for the department. He said that they were purchased by a contractor, and he knew nothing about where they were made."

"I do," said Henry Worthington, laconically. "I found goods being made for Smith's in two of the worst sweaters' dens in the city, filthy, crowded, unspeakable. I found several families in tenement-houses doing things for Smith's."

"Oh, don't," said the girl. Henry was ashamed. There were shining tears in her eyes. Her life was hard enough without his making it harder. He would think of something cheerful.

"The only way to better the thing," he said hastily, "is to educate the public not to buy at these places. It would be impossible to educate directly the owners of concerns like this. The sole avenue of appeal to them is through their pockets, for they are unscrupulous and

greedy. The profits here must be enormous, too great for any honest business. I've talked with one of the buyers and with some of the drummers for the establishment. In some departments it's a clear fifty-per-cent gain. Proprietors will not give up money like that for nothing. But if they find that people won't buy their unrighteous goods they will better the conditions under which those goods are made. Their consciences can be dictated to them by their patrons."

He stopped. Consolation was a failure. A scarlet wave of colour rippled over the girl's face, and died away in absolute pallor, except for the touch of pink at the ears. He hastily took his leave. The girl gazed after him as if all hope went too. Then she picked up a card that had fallen from his memorandum book. A list of wages pencilled on the back caught her eye.

"Dresses, trimmed, made for \$1.20 per doz.

"Silk waists, 98c. a doz.

"Wrappers, calico, 49c. a doz.

"Coats finished, 36c. a doz.

"Aprons made, 22c. a doz.

"Coats made, 32c. each."

"Oh," moaned the daughter of the proprietor of Smith's.
"It can't be!"

She stood behind the counter, her back half turned toward the customers, her head leaning against a huge wax doll on the shelf. She was summing up the situation. This swift, impersonal verdict of the young thinker who had taken the trouble to investigate facts with patience, and whose standard of judgment differed from the mere trade standard of greed, was final. And it was very simple. Her father was not responsible because work was hard. It was always that. He was responsible for the criminal element in the conditions under which work was done for him, for negligence, exposure, oppression

directly hostile to life. Suddenly she became conscious that Mary Burns was whispering in her ear.

"If I was you I wouldn't let that young man come again," she said. "It don't look well."

Annice turned, indignant, to explain, but Mary was already back at her counter, holding a slimy shirt waist up before an emaciated countrywoman, and saying:—

"Worth twice the money you'd pay for it, madam, and just in the latest style."

The utter strain of work and thought was too much for Annice. Laughter and tears together broke down her self-control. Mary was as good a chaperone as Madame Von Holst. She, with her icy dignity and reserve, had been reproved by a shop-girl! Then her smiles faded, and she dried her eyes. She was conscious that glances of curiosity were coming toward her from all sides. The floor-walker spoke sharply to her. A purchaser had been neglected and had gone away. He made a memorandum in his note-book to the effect that Anna Whitney had been seen receiving notes from a customer.

"Are you mad at me?" asked Mary Burns, as they left the shop together, holding in their hands the envelopes containing their week's wages.

"Mad?" said Annice, with her loveliest smile. "No, only you don't understand."

Mary was looking at her companion's face, with its beauty of cut and colouring, its subtle beauty of expression, and she thought she did.

"I don't know that man at all," began Annice.

"I thought not," said Mary Burns, gravely, "but people don't blush for nothing."

Annice bit her lips. Her dignity had grown used to shocks in the last few days.

"No," she answered sadly, "people don't blush for nothing, but that young man had nothing to do with it. He's been at the shop only once."

"Twice or three times," said Mary Burns, stoutly. "He

was there day before yesterday. You didn't see him, but he saw you."

"But he didn't come to see me," answered Annice, with a touch of impatience. "He had some questions to ask about the management of the place. He's a sociologist."

"A what?" asked Mary. "You'd better look out for him!"

"He's trying to find out the things that are wrong in that place, and to set them right," said Annice, with indignation. "It isn't fit to work in, you know that. It isn't clean and the wages aren't half enough to live on."

"Oh, take care, take care!" cried Mary Burns. She put out her hand to shield Annice from a bicycle that threatened her life at a crossing. Then she clutched her skirt and drew her out of the way of a passing cab. She had a constant feeling of responsibility in regard to the protection of this new girl.

"I'm so afraid something will run over your feet," she said in answer to the amused inquiry in her companion's eyes. "It kind of seems as if you had always had somebody to take care of you."

"I haven't," answered Annice, "since I was a little girl."

They were pushing their way through the crowd when Annice felt her arm grasped in a clutch that hurt. Mary Burns's eyes were shining with the splendour of an inspiration. "Will you come home to supper with me? I'd rather have you come when Jennie's there. It's Saturday night, and they keep open till nine at Schlesinger's. But maybe we ain't got knives and forks enough for three, and I guess you'd better come now. We can go and fetch Jennie at nine. She can't have her supper till then."

Annice accepted the invitation graciously, then followed her hostess into a tiny baker's shop. Pies marked ten cents, cakes marked twelve cents, cookies marked six cents a dozen were displayed in the glass cases. The young man who

served as clerk waited expectantly as the newcomers examined his wares.

"Which would you rather have?" asked Mary, with gravity. "Pie, or spice cakes?"

Annice saw that the cakes were but two cents apiece. The pie was ten.

"I'd much rather have spice cakes," she said earnestly. Mary smiled.

"Jennie likes 'em better, too," she said. "It's the chocolate frosting."

Opening the envelope containing her wages, Mary Burns gave a little cry of delight. In addition to the usual coins, an extra fifty-cent piece fell out. Round it was wrapped a paper saying, "Wages raised to three dollars and a half on account of the large number of sales made this week." She started to show it to Annice, but decided not to. Annice was touching her envelope with one slender finger, and looking down at it with unfathomable grief in her eyes.

"Her wages haven't been raised," said Mary to herself. "They must be awful low; I s'pose she's a two-dollar girl now."

It wrung Annice's heart to see the way in which Mary Burns counted the pennies of change as she paid for her cakes and her loaf of bread. One, two, three — her whole soul was in the operation. For generations the family had counted pence with that painful care. No, instead of giving her too few the man had given her too many coins. She ran back and put a penny down on the counter.

"You cheated yourself," she said in a low tone to the young man in the bakery. She did not want the proprietor to hear. "Now tell me what you're going to do about wages," she demanded.

"There ought to be," said Annice, emphatically, "a revolution. I never thought of things before. People who work as hard as all these people do — clerks and seamstresses, ought to have large enough wages to keep them alive."

"You'll just lose your place if you talk like that," said Mary Burns. "But keep still and keep what you've got till you put your finger on something better. (She must have awful poor pay, or she wouldn't feel like that,)" said Mary to herself. ("I'm glad I didn't speak about the rise.")

"I don't care so much about the others," said Mary, passionately, "but there's Jennie with her weak back, cooped up in that hot basement-room, some nights till nine o'clock at night. She's in the hardware department. The place is just over there. I tell you Smith's is a palace by the side of it. You see," and the girl's eyes were troubled, "she couldn't get a very good place. She is older. She ain't very strong, and she ain't what they call pretty."

That room was just like Mary Burns, Annice thought, after the horror of climbing the dark stairs was over. There was a primitive cleanliness and simplicity about it. The patchwork quilt on the bed, the sunbonnet on the wall — it was virginal, old-fashioned, sweet. Touches of the grotesque added to the suggestion of up-country life. There was a wreath of hair flowers in a frame on the wall. A china image, indistinct enough in outline to leave the spectator uncertain as to whether it was a lamb or a lion, decorated the top shelf of a "what-not" in the corner. Blue china covered the lower shelves of this piece of furniture.

"We brought what things we could," said the hostess, as she caught her guest's eyes surveying the room. "We had to pay fifty cents for gettin' the what-not and the chiny here, but they was the only things left from the auction, and we thought we couldn't spare them. Now you take off your hat and set down by the window and watch the nuns, while I get supper."

She refused with scorn all offers of help. Annice obediently seated herself by the window, and looking down, gave a little cry of delight. A tall building, with a golden cross above it, rose among the dirty tenement houses like a lily from the mire. Walking two by two among the apple trees in the great walled garden behind it, went nuns, "in

black clothes and in white," singing. They were going to hold vesper service at a tiny shrine among the trees. The gentle wind made their tapers flicker into longer flame. Ivy climbed the red brick walls of the building, broken, where, in a high niche, a white Christ kept watch over the quiet of the green garden, the tumult of the squalid streets. The beauty of the picture made the girl's eyes dim.

"They're lots of company for me," said Mary Burns, joining her guest at the window, with a knife in her hand, the loaf of bread in the other. "Maybe it ain't right. I was raised a Presbyterian, but I do like to hear them sing at their prayers. Sometimes they come out and hang up clothes and beat rugs. It's a school. You see the children playing out there and the sisters taking care of 'em. I've seen them out there in the spring with long torches burning apple-tree worms. I don't know what we could have done here if we hadn't had those nuns to watch."

The little supper-table with its clean cloth, its cracked blue china, its bread and butter, cakes, dried beef, touched something very far down in Annice's heart. It roused memories of those old days of poverty, for she had dried cups just like these years ago for her mother. The homeliness of it all, with the suggestion of comfort, meant something real, something to flee to in time of need. A sense of caring about it, a feeling of identity with the plain, affectionate life that had been carried on over these cups and saucers, brought a look of content to her face. The hostess eyed her with satisfaction. She had never seen the new girl look so happy. Annice nibbled daintily her slice of bread. She could not bear to eat it. What would the sisters have for breakfast? If her aunt and Madame Von Holst could only see this table!

It grew late. The sound of singing from the nun's garden died away. Mary did not light the candle. The guest had considerably preferred twilight. They sat in growing shadow, with the soft, sweet air of the clear

autumn evening stealing in through the window. Mary was telling the story of her childhood, of their departure from home, of their struggles in the city, and scene after scene of the cruel little drama passed vividly before the eyes of Annice.

"You see," said Mary, "we couldn't pay the interest on the mortgage, and it was foreclosed. We tried everything. Father worked out by the day, besides doing his own work. Mother and Jennie took in sewing from the city, and I used to sew on buttons and rip out bastings. After the sale, father took an awful cold one day digging ditches for the farmer in the next place. He was to stay in the house and work it on shares, but father got pneumonia and died. A week from the day we buried him, mother died of the same thing. The neighbours paid for the funerals." Her voice was broken by a fierce little sob. "We've got to pay that money back yet, if it kills us. Then there wasn't anything to do. We couldn't work the place, so we had an auction and sold off all the stuff. It was in winter. They all came into the kitchen and the auctioneer stood on the sofa. I remember everything. I was ten years old. They sold our old blue cradle for fifty cents. They sold father's hair trunk, and mother's *Household Book of Poetry*, and the old footstool mother had used ever since she was married, and father's bread-and-milk bowl. Jennie wouldn't keep a thing. A neighbour bid in the what-not and the cups, and we kept them, but everything else went to pay our debts. They took us off to the depot in the slush one day. We brought just that leather trunk, and that's the last we ever saw of the place. None of it need have happened," said the girl, with a sudden burst of passion, "if my mother's cousin hadn't cheated her out of her inheritance."

Annice saw it all: the scattering of those pieces of furniture, dear because of the long life lived with them; the line of wagons moving toward the old graveyard at those winter funerals; the exile of the two sisters; Jen-

nie's struggles to win bread for both; and, through those years of tenement-house life, the process of slow defeat for those who are losers in the game. She realized now something of the slow logic of poverty. The inevitable spending of dollar after dollar, the lack of reserve-fund for emergencies, the constant striving to make one penny do the work of three—it is the arithmetic of despair. In these ways comes the slow crushing of those not found fitted to survive—in a world where survival is, after all, hardly an honour.

"Let me help you," cried the young heiress, leaning forward in the darkness and touching Mary's hand. This confidence on the part of a working girl was very sweet to one whose superfluous wealth had meant a kind of isolation.

"You!" exclaimed Mary Burns. She was thinking of her new fifty cents, and of the two dollars that her friend probably received. The word stung Annice, and she shrank back into her chair. Did she want to aid people with her father's money? The air-castle that she had been building for buying back the little farm, sold at auction for eight-hundred dollars, tumbled about her ears. She could not use the money earned at Smith's, and—she was penniless.

"I guess you need help yourself, more," said Mary. "Thank you just the same."

"I think I do," said Annice Gordon, sadly.

Mary lighted a tallow candle and looked at the little nickel clock on the mantel. It was time to go for Jennie. She escorted her guest down the flights of ill-smelling stairs, put out the candle, and carefully hid it, with a match at the side, in a dark corner on the ground floor. They went from the dark court into the half-lighted street. Annice was terrified. Half-drunken men staggered into their way, and saucy boys called after them. People, crowded together on tenement-house doorsteps, stared and smiled, refusing to move out of the way. But the fearlessness of Mary Burns was inspiring. She walked straight ahead,

her eyes fixed on her objective point, deaf to the remarks sent after her, and with but one thought in her mind, that of protecting the girl at her side.

Schlesinger's was a small department-shop in the heart of the slums. It stood on a corner, its wares displayed in the windows and on the streets: sauce-pans, brooms, dusters, hammocks, rough clothing for men, shoes. Mary went like an arrow through the main room, and dragged Annice with her down the basement stairs. Jennie looked up and smiled.

"'Most ready," she said. She was putting away tin cups, iron spoons, rolling-pins, and cake-cutters.

"It's Annie Whitney," whispered Mary.

"She talks a good deal about you," said Jennie, looking at Annice, but going on steadily with her work. Her eyes startled Annice. Even her mother's patient eyes had always begged for something — peace. This woman's face seemed free from even so gentle a demand as that. It was untroubled, unattached, as if nothing could touch it again. A peculiar expression passed over it as she looked at the visitor, and she stopped for a minute, an armful of tin things in her hands.

"Maybe you wouldn't feel flattered if you was told that you resemble my grandmother," she remarked, "but you do."

The minute's delay confused her, and the armful of tin things rattled to the floor. She stooped to pick them up, and fainted. Mary stretched her sister out on the floor, picked up a tin pan, and fanned her vigorously. Annice placed a huge feather duster under the sick girl's feet.

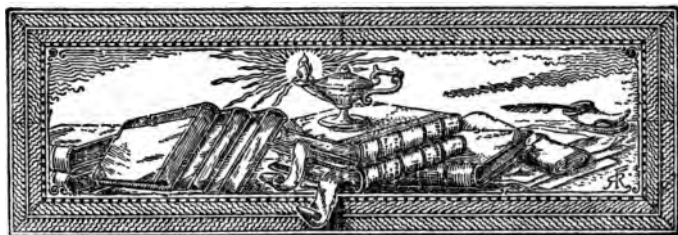
"There ain't a waiting-room in this place, there ain't a sofa," said Mary, indignantly. "This thing has happened twice before. She always gets faint when she has to stand up all day and all the evening too."

A clerk in a blue blouse asked if he could do anything to help. Others gathered in a group, shutting off the air.

"Get me some water, please," said Mary, "and send these people away."

They went reluctantly. Annice and Mary, kneeling on the floor, watched Jennie's eyes as they slowly opened. A faint smile came to her lips as she saw Annice.

"Don't mind me," she said. "It's nothing. It's just my spine."



CHAPTER XI



PROFESSOR PENROSE was lonely. Everybody was away. Juliette was in Florida. Annice Gordon had not yet come home. Despite the early twilights these autumn days seemed to drag on to an unwarrantable length. The calf-bound books in the library had lost their wonted spell. For once, the past was no company for Professor Penrose.

That baffled purpose had brought restlessness into his scholar calm. He had a feeling that he was shut away from life's banquet, and he was an-hungered. Annice was constantly in his mind. Unconsciously, as he wrote his lectures at his beautiful rosewood desk, or read at the table, his hand at his forehead, one soft gray lock of hair falling over his slender fingers, he was planning the future. The household need not be broken up. Juliette was fond of Annice, and the girl's coming would be to her, in a way, the returning of her dead daughter. Standing by his diamond-paned latticed windows, or strolling over the campus and among the college buildings, the lover planned the next winter's reading with Annice in early Italian art and literature. Despite the unwonted excitement of so strong a strain upon his feelings, Mr. Penrose was

happy. Life was at its best for him when seen through a mist of dreams.

It was Indian summer. There were heaps of dried leaves in the streets, and the founder's statue in the centre of the quadrangle stood under a shower of golden leaves. From corners on the highways and from behind the cemetery wall rose the faint smoke of bonfires, bringing back, in its poignant odours, a sense of myriad days long gone. Gracious November sunshine rested over everything, and man, like nature, fell into an Indian summer mood.

It was on one of these rare days that Penrose, strolling under an avenue of yellow maples on the common, and studying the values of their colour against the veiled blue of the sky, bethought him of his purpose in regard to Mary Burns. Why had he not remembered before? Action of any kind would serve to lighten these hours of loneliness. Why should he not go now? There were no lectures to be given to-day. He consulted his watch. It was half-past three. He turned and walked down Jersey Avenue toward the bridge that connected the south side of the city with the north. Smith's was somewhere over the river. He did not know where.

He enjoyed that walk, down the crowded street and across the river. Passing faces had a remote interest for him, and the human spectacle rarely failed to charm. The sight of a group of students, with shapeless felt hats tilted awry over unkempt hair, marred his pleasure and made him shiver with a momentary consciousness of how this rough life had always grated on his nerves. He had no gospel for the badly dressed. He forgot this touch of irritation, however, as he paused on the bridge to watch the restless steam-tugs and ferry-boats making tumult in the harbour. He even looked, with brotherly interest, at a tramp who happened to be sharing this minute of enjoyment with him; looked, and moved away. On the other side of the bridge he asked an Irish policeman where

Smith's was to be found. The policeman looked at his questioner with a slow glance that travelled from that gentleman's distinguished hat to the tips of his slender boots, dirty now with common dirt.

"Where have you been," said the policeman, "and you don't know where Smith's is? Keep right on. It's on this street, Dowden Avenue, to the left."

He kept on. Dowden Avenue was unknown to him. He walked with difficulty through the unmannerly crowd. Especially trying were the minutes when sticky-looking children ran against him. One chubby Irish boy stumbled and fell, grasping with both hands the professor's knee in order to right himself. Penrose freed the injured member and hastened on. There was tumult behind him. Rough music sounded in his ears. Rattling through the middle of the street came a great band-wagon, drawn by four horses. The shrieking brass instruments were playing: "Hail the Conquering Hero comes!" Words were printed on the sides of the wagon: "GO TO SMITH'S! EVENT OF A LIFE-TIME!" A crowd of screaming boys who ran after the chariot nearly upset Mr. Penrose as he stood to look. A little farther on he saw the establishment itself. He wandered vaguely in, and stood transfixed before the spectacle that met his eyes. Nothing in his previous life and training had prepared him for this.

He knew how he meant to proceed, he said to himself, as he pressed his finger to his forehead, trying to think in the confusion of this crowd where it was difficult even to keep his feet. He was going to the manager to inquire about a girl called Mary Burns. But he almost forgot his quest, yielding to the fascinations of this strange place. The short-sighted brown eyes gazed in bewildered fashion from behind the gold-rimmed eye-glasses, at collections of artificial flowers, purple, magenta, solferino; at the display of cheap books. Freeing his arm from the crowd, he picked up one of the books. It was by the Duchess. He touched *The Light of Asia* furtively with the tip of his

finger, and examined a seven-cent edition of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*.

"Extraordinary," he murmured under his silky beard, "the tastes of the vulgar!"

There seemed to be no one of whom he could make inquiries. Every one was busy. The cash-girls were running from counter to desk with speed that struck him as miraculous. The clerk in the book-department was selling a volume to a belated traveller, and had no time to answer questions. Carried by the crowd past the spot where refreshments were dispensed, he was asked if he would have a cup of tea, and he declined hurriedly, courteously, shuddering lest so trying a fate should befall him. Bent on discovery, he worked his way toward the toy-counter. Here, interest passed into bewilderment and bewilderment into confusion as he found himself face to face with Henry Worthington.

"Good afternoon," he said, as soon as he could recover his breath. "Are you — shopping here?"

Henry, in a sheltered corner, had been examining a note-book, glancing furtively now and then toward the toy-counter with a look that a spectator might have interpreted as indicative of a desire for jumping-jacks and pink balloons.

"No," said Henry, indignantly, "I'm studying."

Mr. Penrose adjusted his glasses and tried to convince himself that he saw straight.

"*The Light of Asia*," he murmured, "*Molly Bawn*, *The Man from New York*."

"It's facts, not books," said Henry. "Look here, Penrose, are you busy? I'd like to consult you about something."

"Certainly," said Professor Penrose. "Shall we step outside?"

"We might sit down here," said Henry, insinuatingly. "Nobody's here," he added with regret.

Mr. Penrose had stopped to contemplate a collection of

twenty-five cent busts of Dewey, Sampson, and Lieutenant Hobson, arranged in the shadow of a ragged pennant captured from a Spanish vessel. The sight of anything connected with the late unfortunate war was exceedingly painful to him. He suffered from the mistakes of his country as only those gifted with superior and inactive enlightenment can suffer.

The two men seated themselves on two high stools by the toy-counter. Mr. Penrose looked inquiringly down toward his feet.

"I came on a peculiar errand," he observed, forgetting Henry's request. He had an uneasy feeling that he ought to explain himself. "The fact is, I am deeply interested in a young girl."

Henry blushed. The professor hurried on.

"Several years ago in the country I discovered a little girl with ambitions. I have always thought I should like to assist her in some way, that perhaps my sister could be of service to her."

He paused, wondering if Henry would make the kind of remark in regard to the situation that his sister had made. Relieved to find that he did not, and thinking better of himself in consequence, the professor proceeded. Neither noticed the girl who had charge of the toy-counter. Annice had been talking for a minute with Mary Burns, and had stolen back to her place. Amazed at seeing Professor Penrose there, talking with the young man who was investigating things so thoroughly, she concealed herself round the corner, for the toy-counter occupied the end of a long V-shaped partition, and wondered what would happen if he should ask to see some toys. Just why he should be here was an enigma. The unforeseen dangers of her experiment set her heart beating, and she lost herself in plans for escape, when suddenly her attention was arrested by the sound of her father's name.

"Gordon?" Mr. Penrose was saying. "I know him very little. With his daughter I am well acquainted.

She visits at my sister's." Mr. Penrose looked at Henry with an expression that said she needed no introduction after that. "Have you met her?"

"No," said Henry, impatiently. He was eager to unburden his mind. "I —"

"That reminds me of an extraordinary coincidence," interrupted the professor. "The girl I was speaking of is a poor relative of Gordon's. The family is of humble origin, you know," he remarked apologetically. His future relations with Annice made him in a manner responsible for the shortcomings of all her race. "Well, that girl, at the last account I had of her, was working in this very shop. If she is still here, and if the story my sister tells me is true, that this place belongs to Gordon, she is taking employment from a family enemy. There was some trouble about a will, and the girl's mother and Gordon were not on speaking terms."

Henry began to look interested.

"I don't know that I ought to tell the story," observed Mr. Penrose, looking at the boy with a judicial air, "and yet it was no secret. The whole neighbourhood talked the matter over freely. And there's a great deal of character-interest attaching to the incident. Possibly there's no harm in sharing it. About ten years ago it fell to my lot to pass a part of the summer in the country, at a place about forty miles from here. It was a charming spot, charming. I won't stop to tell you about it now," he said, wondering at Henry's impatience. "I was recovering from the effects of a fall from my horse, and I was cared for in the family of this cousin of Mr. Gordon."

"I remember," said his hearer, nodding. "It was the year I entered college."

"I became very much interested in this country woman," observed Mr. Penrose. His manner conferred an honour upon her. "She was very intelligent, and just at that minute she was smarting under a sense of wrong. I like best to observe the human soul when it is under the in-

fluence of deep feeling," said Penrose, meditatively. "Her aunt had just died, an aunt to whom my hostess had devoted her life. She was suffering from grief and from a feeling of having been defrauded of her inheritance. Gordon, the only son of this aunt, had had his mother's will drawn up, and at the woman's death, the niece found that she had only twenty-five dollars, instead of the two-thousand-dollar legacy her aunt had promised her."

Penrose had grown animated. He had put his hand on Henry's knee, and was talking in that distinguished way which had so often graced a lecture platform. Annice, her desire for concealment forgotten, had come out of her hiding-place, and stood, breathless, her shining eyes fixed upon the two men.

"Well, undoubtedly Gordon was responsible for that will, but the curious thing is, he seemed to be acting conscientiously in the matter. Old Mrs. Gordon had looked on her niece as a daughter, had shared her home in age. Mrs. Gordon told her son that she wished the property to be divided equally between himself and his cousin. Gordon found, on examining the matter, that it amounted to only about two thousand dollars, a smaller sum than he supposed. He got the idea into his head that his cousin had already had her full portion, that she had received presents from Mrs. Gordon in secret. So he made the will as he did, telling his mother that he had arranged matters as she wanted them. She signed the document without reading it, for she had full confidence in him, and died happy.

"My hostess was very bitter, and she showed an amount of penetration that astonished me. Did you ever notice how much insight into character we sometimes find among the lower classes? 'Samuel has convinced himself that that story is true,' she said. 'He can always pull the wool over his own eyes. He thinks I've cheated Aunt Jane out of my half of the money, and he wants to set things straight. He didn't want to appear a rogue, but he wanted the

money, so he made himself believe that thing, and he tried to make me.' " Mr. Penrose paused.

"Isn't that almost equal to Shakespeare?" he asked, with animation: —

" 'Would'st not play false,
And yet would'st wrongly win.' "

Yet she had never read *Macbeth*. I asked her. Well, that woman died not long after my sojourn in her house. The farm was sold for debt, and the two daughters came to the city to work. I've always meant to assist them in some way if they needed it, but for some reason I lost track of them. I was abroad." He looked guiltily at Henry, and an expression of wistful regret broke the indifference of his face. "The whole matter slipped my mind until the other night when I heard the second tale about Gordon and was set to thinking how curiously human affairs are woven together. This is no place for a girl like little Mary. She was full of promise, and fitted for better things."

Henry's scowl had deepened.

"Let's get out of this place," he said. "I should like to hear the rest of this. Everything I hear about Gordon is of the most damaging character."

He had completely forgotten his desire to ask Miss Whitney further economic questions. He rose and walked away without a word. But Professor Penrose, rising and turning, found himself face to face with Annice Gordon. Her terrified gray-green eyes stared helplessly into his dazed brown ones. Neither spoke. The lover hardly knew whether it was a maiden of flesh and blood who stood before him, or only an image from his dreams, projected into space. When he saw that she moved, he turned and followed Henry, trying to shake off a feeling of paralysis that stiffened his whole frame.

The air outside revived him. Henry hailed a passing car.

"Come out and take a walk with me on the marshes,

Penrose," the young man was saying. "I want to talk some things over with you." It was well that Henry did not wait for an answer. Penrose was incapable at that minute of either assent or demur. Before he knew what had happened he found himself on the back seat of an open electric car, in the fumes of unsavoury tobacco, being whirled along in the face of a breeze that disarranged his beard, over the bridge, through South Winthrop, out into the open country by the sea.

"There!" said Henry, as they alighted. "Now we can talk. I want some advice," he added, as they stepped upon the driveway by the sea. "You belong to the university. You are just the man to help me. I want to know if you think that a place like Winthrop, standing for all that is best in the intellectual and moral life of the country, has any right to money earned dishonestly."

"I never," said Mr. Penrose, turning his dazed brown eyes upon his companion, "had occasion to consider the question."

The eyes of both men fell on the huge board comet bearing the advertisement of Smith's. Henry groaned. Even in the marshes they could not escape. The trail of the serpent was everywhere.

"There's occasion now," he cried hotly. "From all I can learn about Gordon, his money isn't the kind of thing we ought to handle. Let's get up a paper and protest."

They passed a jutting point of land near a little wood. In front of them a rocky meadow lay, full of dead golden-rod, whose pale-brown faded flowers stood out against a background of blue sea. Two tiny vessels drifted softly past, their white sails set wing and wing. Mr. Penrose stood, leaning his elbow on a lichen-covered rail on the fence by the meadow, listening to Henry with the look of one who is trying to hear a voice that comes from a long way off. Henry waited, gazing with assumed patience, down through the wood toward the white lighthouse that stood on a rocky point not far away. The beauty of the

picture, the long stretch of curving shore, the distant city with its encompassing heights, seen through a broken veil of faded red oak leaves, escaped him. In this moment of depression the lighthouse guarding the entrance to the university town seemed unpleasantly symbolic, from the fact that it was no longer used and had no light.

"I have always held," Mr. Penrose was saying, "that it is better, if we are to keep the untroubled serenity of our academic life, for scholars not to concern themselves too much with political and practical questions such as you suggest."

The young man controlled himself with effort.

"I cannot agree with you," he said curtly. "I fail to see what is to become of the country if men who have other motives than those of mere self-interest stand aloof from practical politics with their hands in their pockets and do nothing. But that's not the question now. I want to discuss this special matter of the gift."

"It is a new species of scruple," remarked Penrose, brushing a bit of lichen from his coat. "It has not been the habit of institutions so far as I know to enter into a discussion of the way in which benefactions are obtained."

"But it is time that institutions should consider the question," said Henry, eagerly. "We stand among the thinkers of our country. There is no doubt that a more sensitive economic conscience is being born in these last few years. We can't afford to lag behind the public. If our industrial laws are to be arraigned, it should be done by men of thought, who are capable of dealing with the question in a broad-minded way."

Penrose hesitated. He did not wish to commit himself. In matters literary his opinions were decisive, final. From his personal opinion there was no appeal. In matters religious and ethical he suspended judgment. A certain wariness of intellect had always kept him from being trapped into too genuine a doubt or too genuine a belief. A spiritual diplomat, he had for years maintained a truce between

scepticism and conviction. He had an indulgent way of intimating to the Creator that he saw through him, yet he tried after a fashion to keep on good terms with him, lest, after all, the credulity of men should prove true. For the rest, he had avoided political and economic questions. These things savoured too much of the vulgar present.

As Henry watched him, a wave of that old passionate wish to carry the burden of things came over him, and he forgot everything except this burning desire to save from wrong action the university that he loved.

"Penrose," he said, "help me fight this thing out. What you've told me this afternoon simply clinches the whole matter. Gordon is unscrupulous. His fortune is an economic disgrace. A decent institution has no right to it. I've got to take the thing up. It is a question of right and wrong, and I can't shirk. But it's going to break my father's heart. I've got nobody to stand by me. You must."

Professor Penrose shook his head.

"It isn't in my line, Henry," he said. "I know nothing about money matters. I should be of no use."

"But, Penrose," cried Henry, desperately, "tell me if I oughtn't to do it. Tell me if I ought to stop on father's account. It's horribly hard."

Penrose laid his hand on Henry's shoulder. He was looking straight at the boy, yet Henry felt that Penrose did not see him. The young man was vaguely conscious that something was troubling the older one. His English accent had deserted him completely. This happened only in moments of great emotion.

"It's a difficult matter for another person to decide," he said.

Henry saw that further appeal was useless.

"I must go home," he said. "I have a lecture to finish. Will you come?"

Penrose shook his head with a chastened smile.

"I think I'll take a stroll," he said. "Good night."

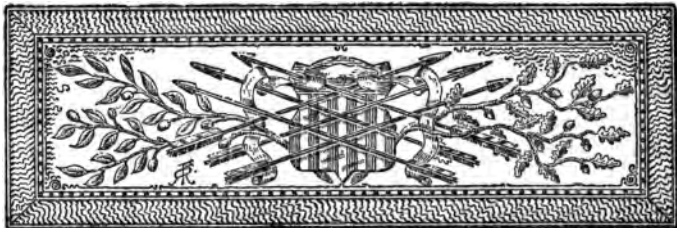
As he moved on with his long, gentle stride, in all his unruffled distinction, not one of his soft gray hairs out of place, Henry looked after him with bitter condemnation.

"If academic life leads to that," he said contemptuously, grinding the dust with his heel, "I'll be a coal-heaver instead."

He turned and went back for his car.

Penrose drew a sigh of relief at being alone. He could hear nothing, feel nothing but his own present trouble. It coloured earth and sky and sea. In that shop, behind a counter, he had seen Annice Gordon, the maiden of his choice, occupied apparently with a shop-girl's duties. All the reasons for this extraordinary conduct that imagination could summon proved inadequate. Possibly it was some form of temporary insanity. Did her family know? Ought he to tell his sister? There was relief in the thought of insanity. If this were not so, it was a bit of masquerading, a school-girl's escapade, a scrap of vulgar drama that would stamp Annice forever as outside his world. He remembered those queer, unaccountable lapses in taste that he had noted before.

Professor Penrose's eyes searched the landscape about him for relief, but in vain. There stretched the marshes that he loved, where the vivid yellow of marsh-grass was tangled with the brown. The sun was going down, a dull red ball in the flushing sky of the west. The red light was caught in the haze among the trees of the little wood, lingered round the oak leaves, touched with crimson the long lagoons in the flat brown meadows at his feet. For once, visible beauty did not mean escape from trouble. The air grew chilly, and Mr. Penrose, as he turned toward home, shivered under the shock that the strong demands of clear sunshine and his recent terrible enlightenment had made upon his love.



CHAPTER XII



COMING down the crowded steps of an elevated railway station in Chicago, Mr. Gordon happened to remember that he had not yet opened his morning's mail. Business was pressing. At Mott's the shoe-department, the carriage-department, the book-department had to be enlarged. The tide of custom was going all his way. This morning an imperative message from the manager had summoned him from breakfast, and he had gone down to his huge establishment with a gratified sense of being the recipient of that temporal good promised long ago to those like him. The letters that he had thrust into his breast pocket he drew out now, counting them slowly as he went down the street.

Five letters, all with type-written addresses. Why was there nothing from Annice? He had expected long before this a letter expressing contrition for those unfilial words uttered on the eve of his departure. Did she remember his sacrifices, his hardships endured for her? Did she remember the time when her mother had been ill, and he had walked the floor with the wailing baby in his arms for half the night? The paternal care that he had lavished upon her had met with this reward. An irritated sense of fatherhood deprived of its due settled into lines of injury

at the corners of his mouth. He had been more dutiful to his parents.

Opening the letters one by one as he pushed his way along the street, thrusting them with crumpled edges back into their envelopes, he stopped suddenly, stock-still, gazing in bewilderment at the type-written lines. The surging tide of Chicago business life beat against him, but he stood unmoved, oblivious to the fact that feet were treading upon his feet, that elbows jostled him from all directions. In a half-dozen business-like lines the matron of the Merton Home for Working Girls asked Mr. Gordon to tell her what he knew of one Annice Whitney, who had recently become an inmate of the Home and was working now at Smith's. She had given his name as reference. Mr. Gordon saw it all. His naturally keen, suspicious mind had been well trained in the world of trade to the work of ferreting out hard problems. The unusual name, the attempt at disguise, employment at Smith's—all this linked itself with his last half-hour at home, with the girl's undutiful accusation, and her threat, "I am going to find out." In less than an hour Mr. Gordon was on an eastern-bound express. His baggage he left behind him at the hotel, telegraphing back from the first station that it was to be sent on by express. He had no time to stop for trifles. The family reputation was at stake.

He tried not to think on that swift journey home. He kept examining the documents in his pockets, the reports of the cashier at Mott's, and balancing up the receipts with those of Smith's at Winthrop. Undoubtedly he had been prospered. Wealth like his meant the peculiar reward of right doing. He had been singled out for special blessing. Sometimes this thought made him almost forget the trouble in his mind. Then, looking out at the swiftly rushing fields and trees, and the disappearing roofs of country homesteads, a fear of possible disgrace stabbed him sharply in his most vulnerable spot.

Anything to keep from thinking of that! When the

mental relief to be found in his business-concerns was exhausted, he took refuge in the past. With pride he recognized one unswerving purpose in the mind of the bare-foot boy, the steady youth, the struggling young man, the regally wealthy self of the present. To succeed; to keep his eyes fixed on the goal; to be a person of importance, dignity, power; to sway men and command homage—here was the aspiration that the hardship of picking up chips for his mother had roused in the bosom of the five-year-old child. The boys in the district school had laughed in those days at his patched trousers. Gordon, by way of revenge for that derision, now flung his bank account into the teeth of fate.

But in all this life of endeavour how little sympathy had been accorded him! His wife had never understood. Self-pity passed into the merchant's eyes as he remembered how listlessly Ellen had gazed at the splendour with which he had surrounded her. She had failed him in the great effort of his life. And now his daughter—not the unappreciative passivity of the wife, but the open rebellion of the daughter, was to be faced. Perhaps it was the penalty of lofty endeavour to be always misunderstood, and yet, how sweet would sympathy have been along the path of greatness!

He had met such obstinacy from the people bound to him by family ties! Annice had inherited this from her mother, whose meek exterior had covered but had not concealed a pertinacious clinging to her own opinion. Spite of long experience it had always been hard for Mr. Gordon to realize that people could have tastes or opinions unlike his own. His mind now travelled fretfully back to the pleasures he had devised for his wife, the gifts he had showered upon her, the plans he had made and had insisted that she should carry out. She had always complied and had expressed gratitude, but with a reserve. Her spoken words he had controlled. Her silences he had not been able to master, and that speechless insubordination angered him even now.

From these slight trials, his thought wandered back to greater. It was a curious fact that there was always somebody in Mr. Gordon's mind from whom he was suffering present injury. A word, a hint, a glimpse of some bit of life upon the street, was constantly rousing latent wrongs. Slow brooding meant steady accession of hurt feeling, until all his inner consciousness was drowned in a swelling flood of self-pity. It was Jane Burns of whom he was thinking now. Her unjust accusation of him was of course only a proof of her utter lack of principle. She had condemned herself forever in that attack upon his character. All night long in his narrow berth in the sleeping car Mr. Gordon lived over this story, half falling asleep to dream a bit of it, waking with the jolting of the wheels to take up some new fragment of it. It wove itself round that shadowy landscape of spectral trees and dusky streams that they hurried past in the night. He remembered how he had tried to win back Jane's liking, for the old wistful longing for approval had at one time softened his feeling of resentment toward her. It had all been in vain. Then he recounted the steps he had taken in the matter. Little things had shown him the right course of action. His mother's fortune had surely dwindled. She had been living under the influence of Jane and her husband, while he had been struggling on a clerk's salary to make his way in the world. As for his action, he had performed a simple deed of justice. To be defrauded of his inheritance would have meant to him not mere loss of money, but, as in Bible days, the losing of a parent's blessing. Had not the event proved the righteousness of his course? A little seed had brought great harvest. For that small sum of money — to Gordon now it seemed pitifully small — had meant the turning-point in his career. An inexperienced country lad, he had taken those few thousands to the stock-market. A stroke of luck had blessed his first venture. He had tried again, and lo! a fortune had become his. He had made a corner in flour, and had held up the price until the poor in San Francisco and Chi-

cago had gone hungry, and little children in Italy had cried for bread. A smile came to Mr. Gordon's face in the darkness of the sleeping-car as he recalled the keen excitement of those days. Europe had learned of the existence of the small boy who had once worn patched trousers. The markets of St. Petersburg and of Berlin had felt the touch of power in his finger. There was a little quiver of satisfaction in the forefinger of his right hand as he thought of this, and he stroked it gently with the other hand. Resisting all offers for future speculation, he remembered with satisfaction, he had left the stock-market just in time. Such penetration on the part of a novice in knowing when to stop had not been heard of among the bulls and bears. Now, safely invested in retail dry-goods houses, that money was bringing him rich profit, some sixty, some a hundred fold.

That initial action had been just. Had he not done it? Was he not a Gordon? He belonged to a family that had always been in the right. The Gordons had been righteous as far back as the memory of man could go. They had been pious, thrifty, canny, each handing down to his many descendants his patrimony and his creed, the patrimony increased by good management, the iron creed unchanged. Being born into the family insured one in this life a generous amount of self-respect, and in the world to come, life everlasting. To Samuel Gordon, logic was logic, blood was blood. The fact that this course of action had suggested itself to him made it seem almost right. His having done it was proof positive.

Yet the surety of one minute gave way to the misgiving of the next. He was dressed and waiting for his breakfast. It is a hungry moment when the wine of life runs low. Mr. Gordon had tipped the waiter generously in order to insure prompt service. He had been kept waiting for fifteen minutes. He kept his watch out in his hand, snapping the cover now and then to relieve his feelings. A momentary suspicion that there was a difference between himself and the moral law made him uncomfortable. The

forbidden thought of Annice and her nonsense reinforced the doubt. He allowed himself to think for a minute, only a minute, of his record in retail dry-goods dealing in Winthrop, Chicago, and New York. This record he found flawless, according to the laws of the industrial world. In business as in religion Mr. Gordon's curse had been the letter of the law.

It was with relief that he welcomed to a neighbouring seat, as he went back to the parlour car, a fellow-trustee of Winthrop who had boarded the train at Pittsburg. It was Dr. Bruce, a man of integrity, honesty, wisdom. He nodded pleasantly to Mr. Gordon, meanwhile beating the back of the plush chair with his hand and watching the dust fly up.

"Deadly arrangement," he observed, shaking his head. "Must be full of microbes. The company ought to put in wicker chairs."

Then he dropped into his seat and began reading his newspaper. He stopped and turned suddenly to Mr. Gordon.

"Fine thing you've done for the university, Gordon," he said. "I suppose it's an old story now, but I haven't seen you since I heard of it. It's worth while making money to devote to purposes like that. Is your daughter with you this winter?"

Mr. Gordon answered in the affirmative. There was a glow of pleasure in his stern face, full of uncertainty of expression, with its shifty eyes and its benignant mouth.

"I must send my girls to call on her," Dr. Bruce was saying. "She must be more or less of a stranger in Winthrop."

Mr. Gordon sank back into his chair, reassured. "Worth while making money to devote to purposes like that!" An honest man's testimony is worth having to convince one's neighbour, perhaps, at times, even to convince one's self of one's own integrity. In the glow of benevolence that followed, he planned further donations.

He would make a magnificent present to the Poor Relief Society in his church. A slight chill lessened the warmth of the moment. They would turn the money into a general fund and few would know who gave it. But that old gnawing discomfort of the question, "Would he get his reward?" gave way to more serious trouble. The reference to Annice brought back the tide of present injury, stemmed so long. Annice, whom the best people in Winthrop were ready to receive, was disgracing him. Now that he was ready to show the world a spectacle of paternal and filial devotion, she had ruined all. He remembered a story he had heard the summer before of a girl who had given up her lover in order to stay at home and sacrifice her life to her father. He had wondered then if his daughter would do so much for him. Tears came to his eyes as he thought of the contrast. Think what she was doing! And people would know.

Mr. Gordon nodded. He was getting sleepy. Some people opposite were laughing. He opened his eyes and looked at them sharply. Were they laughing at him? Apparently not. He closed his eyes again, pulling his black silk cap down over his forehead. He had a way of thinking that people were making disrespectful references to him. Once Jane Burns had spoken of disliking people whose eyes were too near together. Samuel Gordon had afterward reproached her with passing that criticism upon his eyes. She had never done so, but yet it was true. Why would his thoughts dwell so persistently on Jane Burns? He recalled that eventful Sabbath afternoon, the last before his mother's death. They had sent for him, knowing that the end was near. His mother, propped up on pillows, gasping for breath in the hot summer air, had asked to have certain things read to her, some psalms, and her own will. Old Mrs. Gordon had understood neither the Scripture nor the will, but she had smiled peacefully and had shut her eyes, dozing. Gordon recalled the picture that had met his eyes upon entering the room. Jane

Burns, looking with indignant eyes at the will, then glancing with pitying tenderness at the worn face of the older woman, almost as white as the muslin frill of the old-fashioned cap she wore. Mrs. Gordon had half wakened when her son came in.

"Is it Samuel?" she said. She made him come to the bedside that she might touch him, and the old, withered, dying hand had wandered tremulously over his face.

"The money's all right, Samuel, as I wanted it?" she asked.

"Just as you wanted it," he answered. "Equally divided." He cast then a glance of reproof at his cousin. Later, Jane and her husband came to the bedroom, bent on calling the will into question in the presence of Mrs. Gordon. Gordon remembered how he had sent them away.

"It is the Sabbath," he said, with a sweep of his hand. "This is no time for the discussion of business matters. Money? What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Six days are enough for this world."

They went away. He stayed by his mother's bedside until she breathed her last.

Gordon grew more and more sleepy. The murmuring of the moving train set itself to remembered music. He nodded, humming a bit of psalm they used to sing in his boyhood:—

"That man hath perfect blessedness
Who walketh not astray
In counsel of ungodly men,
Nor stands in sinners' way.

"And all he doth shall prosper well,
The ungodly are not so.
But like they are unto the chaff,
Which wind drives to and fro."

Wakening, and looking out of the window, he saw that he was nearing home. A huge advertisement stared him

in the face from a neighbouring meadow: "FIFTEEN MILES TO SMITH'S." A little farther on was an enormous board man, with prices of clothing painted on his sleeves, and "SMITH'S" printed in capitals across his chest. Then came a wooden circus-procession, huge elephant, camel, giraffe, buffalo, each carrying upon his back a man who was labelled as an eager customer, hurrying to Smith's. The satisfaction that marks the nearing of familiar and pleasant things brought peace to Mr. Gordon's bosom. He saw his mark painted on the roofs of barns, on the fences, in gigantic wooden letters, cut out and supported by iron staves. The rocks bore his inscription. And now, the huge board signs announced, "SMITH'S. TWO MILES!"

Things went wrong that afternoon at Smith's. The floor-walker was distinctly cross. Annice stood at the toy-counter, her hands clasped, gazing toward the door through which Mr. Penrose and his companion had disappeared. Customers who asked for picture-books and rattles were startled by the tragic eyes she turned toward them. She forgot her newly learned trade. A ten-cent doll she offered to an Irish woman for a dollar, only to be told that she was daft.

"I am afraid that I am," said Annice Gordon, piteously.

The story that Mr. Penrose had told was paralyzing her. If this were true, there was no good anywhere. Was all that her father had said to her about character mere sham? She looked at the world through her new idea of his personality, and she found it bad. There was nothing to depend upon anywhere. This great crushing world of work and weariness, whose was it? Why was it? It was brutal and meaningless. Surely her father's God made any God impossible, for she could not share a belief with him.

Absorbed in her own troubles she failed to see the greater misery in Mary Burns's face. Mary did not stop to think. She worked on feverishly, her cheeks on fire. She laughed more than usual, and made jokes with the other girls at

the counter. Mr. Smith, who very often took his stand nowadays near the ready-made-clothing counter, observed that she looked unusually handsome. When she made a blunder in her work, cutting off only enough gingham for a waist, instead of enough for a dress, he came to the rescue at once.

"Cut off another dress-pattern," he said, "and put this among the remnants. Poor little girl," he added; "I think you must be tired."

Mary's eyes followed him with a look of mingled fear and appeal. He had surrounded her in these hard days with unobtrusive kindnesses. Perhaps she had misunderstood and had been suspicious. She knew only that a terror haunted her night and day, and that the only protecting smile in the wide world was on that man's face. She did not want him to come near her, only to stand far off, where he could hear her cry if the waters came near enough for drowning. Help she must have, but who could help? She looked toward Annice Whitney. Annice was deaf and blind to-day to all except her own great trouble. And anyway, how could a girl poorer than herself aid her?

She must have money. Jennie was too sick to work. Jennie was going to die if she were not helped. Rest and good food might save her, the doctor said. Going on with her work at Schlesinger's could have only one end. Horrible, sickening fear took possession of Mary Burns. She must do something. She must save Jennie. Her own wages would support them for a time, but food and medicine would cost so much. Anxiety was making the girl irritable, and her fits of gayety ended often in sharp words to the girls who asked her help.

"She's real hateful," said a tiny cash-girl, whom Mary had befriended once. "She used to be just lovely. I'm going to keep her waiting for change just as long as I can."

Mary was struggling with a heavy bundle which she was trying to put upon the shelves when she felt the burden lifted from her hands.

"Let me help you," said Mr. Smith.

She thanked him warmly.

"It is a pleasure to do anything for you," he said. "I wish I might do more."

He started. A lady had approached, smiling, leading a chubby boy in sailor's costume. Mr. Smith greeted her cordially and led her away.

"It's Mrs. Smith and his kid," said the little cash-girl, running up to Mary and forgetting the enmity she had shown. "Ain't it sweet?"

Mary turned quickly to arrange the goods upon the shelves. The look in that woman's eyes as they had rested upon her made her hot. The little cash-girl was hurt.

"You needn't be so stuck up," she said scornfully, "just 'cause your hair curls. Your face is awful red. I bet you paint."

Annice was not surprised when her father entered the door that day. She was past being surprised by anything, she told herself. She looked steadily toward him. He saw her and started back. The girl's sharp condemnation of him softened, to her own regret and shame. He looked old, tired, dusty. His benevolent air had slipped away, leaving a gray, harsh, anxious face. She was sorry for him. She was sorry for herself. She was sorriest for that unknown girl whose little patrimony had been the nest-egg for her father's fortune.

Mr. Gordon advanced to the toy-counter.

"You must come home," he said under his breath. Annice hesitated. One of her fellow clerks was looking at her with curiosity. She pushed a music-box toward her father.

"Two dollars and a half," she said aloud. Then she whispered: "Please go away. You will be found out."

Mr. Gordon breathed heavily. He was baffled, irritated. A minute after he began to help play the farce. He lifted a toy bank.

"What is the price of this?"

"Fifty cents," answered his daughter.

"Annice," he said, in an explosive whisper, "I command you, as a father, to return to your home. Will you come?"

The man who had bent the knee to the golden calf forgot that the commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother," comes after the commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." He could not realize that he had forfeited his rights.

"You will be ill. You look sick now. You are disgracing me," he continued.

"I am no more tired," said Annice, "than the other girls in your shop. There is no more danger of my being ill."

Mr. Gordon winced. The girl grew pale.

"Sit down," he said.

"We are not allowed to," answered his daughter. "The floor-walker has orders to report us if we do. I have worked here for two weeks. I am earning two dollars a week. I am trying the experiment of living on that money as other girls are obliged to do. The cash-girls," she added defiantly, "have only a dollar, and some of them are without homes."

Mr. Gordon turned and walked away, slowly, with dragging steps, as if each movement gave him pain. For the first time a dim realization of what these facts might mean entered his mind as he saw his own daughter behind the counter. Annice watched him with remorseful eyes. The hard look faded from her face, and her lips quivered with their old expression of pity. She had not been just. She had believed an outsider's story about her father. She had been self-righteous and repellent and cold. She was sorry, but it was too late. No, it was not too late. As she stood with her hand moving irresolutely on the counter, the face of the old duty thrust itself imperatively through the mist of the new. She had wandered from her path. She had deserted the nearer duty for the more remote, glad

of an excuse to escape a task she dreaded. She had been faithless to her mother's charge. Sternly her Puritan conscience arraigned her, tried her, found her guilty. Annice drew a great sigh, and sentenced herself to the fulfilment of her abandoned purpose. She would go home again.

Her way of cutting the new web of responsibilities she had woven round herself was characteristic. It was half-past five. The shop would close soon. She took her hat and walked in great simplicity toward the door. Out on the street she did not turn toward the Merton Home, but walked down Dowden Avenue, toward South Winthrop.

"I can send for my things," she said. "And I will write to Smith's."

The relief of fresh air and the sight of passing faces was inexpressible. Human life touched her, touched her on every side. One little child looked up at her and smiled. Annice smiled radiantly back. The baby had no responsibilities, no problems. Standing on the bridge she watched the harbour, troubled by its many crafts, with a longing to go out to some tall-masted ship and escape over the blue water. Her face was full of mournful pity for everybody, herself included. Suddenly turning, she met Henry Worthington. He was waiting for a car on his way home.

"I was sorry not to see you this afternoon," he said, taking off his hat. "I was at Smith's with a new list of questions."

She was dumb, looking up at him with tragic eyes.

"What is it?" he demanded. "Can I be of service in any way? You look troubled."

"It isn't anything," said Annice, speaking slowly in her effort at self-control, "that anybody can help."

He looked down at her, as his father had looked at him in his babyhood, with a passionate wish to protect.

"I must go on," said Annice; and she left him. He looked so strong and big and honest that she had to fight

down a temptation to confess to him her masquerading, to appeal to his judgment for help in her perplexity. He gazed after her with a sense of personal hurt in his eyes. Why should burdens always fall on the shoulders least able to bear them? Where was she going? Who took care of her. He was baffled, angry, helpless.

And this mysterious girl, with the ugly blue waist, the pretty head with its spirited carriage, the face that changed and glowed with beauty that came like a flame and died out like a flame, crossed the bridge and left him among the passing people, alone.



CHAPTER XIII



HAT winter seemed interminable to Alfred Worthington. To Henry it was swift and short. The long, clear evenings of December and the blustering days of January failed to afford the younger man half time enough for his work. There were the classes to prepare for, old information had to be sifted and retested for this new use of teaching, whose demands were so much more stringent than those of mere study. There was all the work of laborious investigation in North Winthrop, where he took notes from the answers given him by grimy-faced workmen in factories, pale book-keepers in shops, unemployed men and women in agencies. These overcrowded hours gave to the older man long stretches of unoccupied time, when he walked up and down in his laboratory, trying to drive his mind back to its proper object of pursuit; or when he sat in the library window, his eyes fixed on that bit of high stone wall with its faint covering of green, his thoughts straying out beyond the clear spaces in the rifted clouds of the western sky. His science suffered. For the first time the students grumbled that Worthington's work was not interesting. A note of warning was sounded by the seniors to the lower classes, that they had better not take biology after all.

The hurt to the father in this shadowing of the friendship between him and his son was greater than the hurt to the boy. Since that conversation in the autumn outside of Benedict Warren's door they had not once spoken of the disputed question. Yet they had with them always throughout the winter a consciousness that there was one subject of conversation that was to be avoided. They had dined together, studied side by side in the library in the evenings, had sometimes walked together as of old. Naturally every topic that they touched in conversation led up to the one they were trying to escape. If they spoke of a new cover for the library table, thought drifted to the shops, and the shops suggested Mr. Gordon. If the professor alluded to his microscope, the idea of the possible new outfit that Gordon's gift would mean for his laboratory intruded itself between them. The very bread they ate suggested the wheat trust and other industrial abuses. Of Henry's present work of investigation the father knew nothing, though from the books and pamphlets left on the library table, and from Henry's occasional mention, when talking with other people, of labour-leaders, business-men, charity-workers, the professor suspected that his son was working steadily on practical social problems. He waited with passionate patience for a sign of change, for the restoration of the old confidence. But Henry toiled on in silence. Often, catching the look of sadness in his father's face, he would try to rouse his slowly subsiding remorse. He had to make an effort to remember that which was insistent anguish for the older man. The father, watching Henry's growing firmness of expression, tried to feel less, not more.

Benedict Warren was vaguely uneasy. He saw that the wrinkles between his friend's eyebrows were slowly deepening. He was conscious of a certain restraint now in Alfred Worthington's manner. Ulysses was restless nowadays when he was present at a meeting of the two friends, and Ulysses' sensitive nature was a mirror where his

master's moods were reflected. No further mention of Henry had been made, but Benedict Warren knew. The thought of his old resolution to wrestle with Henry had been rankling in his mind all winter, only, it was hard to convince himself that the matter was important enough for speech. One afternoon Warren entered the library at Lancaster Place. There was a wintry red upon his cheeks, and he was blowing his fingers to make them warm. Ulysses was at his heels. The dog was walking on three legs, having held up one foot to protect it from the cold of the pavement. Alfred Worthington rose to meet his guest.

"What are you reading?" asked Benedict Warren, picking up the pamphlet that his friend had dropped, and settling down comfortably into a chair. The professor looked ashamed.

"*The Need of a Consumer's League in Winthrop*, by Henry Worthington," read the guest, slowly. Then he slapped the pamphlet on his knee.

"I say, Worthington, what's that cub of yours up to, anyhow?"

Worthington shook his head in silence.

"I hear about him," continued Benedict Warren, "all over town. He's putting his nose into everything. He's asked more questions in this city this winter than have ever been asked here before. I can't get on to his idea."

"I wish that he had studied biology or chemistry," said the professor, "and had left economics alone. It is no science, or it is a mongrel science at its best. At its worst—" he pointed to a pile of Labour Bureau reports and Charity Organization circulars on the table, "there's no telling how many kinds of fruitless activity it may lead to."

The scholar's fastidiousness, the sense of holding himself aloof from what he considered common and vulgar ways of thinking, showed in his face. Benedict Warren's eyes betrayed the admiration that he usually managed to

conceal. Alfred's fine reserve in thought and action, that long waiting, in work that meant constant alertness, patience, control, for the finer solutions of life's problems — this had held constant for all these years the loyalty and the affection of the intellectual vagrant.

"Oh, come now!" remonstrated Warren. "You can't complain that the boy has neglected his work. He's cut a broad swath here this winter. They are all singing his praises, from the president down to the boys in his classes."

"Is it so?" asked the professor, in a voice whose joy trembled through assumed indifference.

"And it isn't so very long," observed Benedict Warren, crossing his legs and making himself comfortable by the fire, "since you, too, wanted to know it all and do it all yourself, Worthington. I can remember your sitting on the foot of my bed in Mather Hall at midnight and telling me, when I wanted to go to sleep, that you thought the whole sum of human knowledge could be acquired in a lifetime by a man who gave his mind to it. The desire for omniscience is a disease of youth, like measles. That young one will get over his wandering round and will settle down some day."

Alfred Worthington had thrown his head back in his chair, and he was laughing more heartily than he had laughed for many weeks.

"Now I should be content," he said, "if I should find out the real significance of the smallest specimen among my laboratory slides."

The clock on the mantel struck three. Benedict Warren looked anxiously round the room.

"How does it happen that you are not at work?" he asked. "This is the third time I have found you here in the afternoon lately. You always used to be in your laboratory."

The professor rested his chin on the palm of his hand and looked toward his friend.

"Tired," he answered briefly.

Benedict Warren nerved himself to an effort. He tried to speak with an unconscious air.

"I can remember the time," he remarked, "when you worked at your microscope in your laboratory and lived on bread and milk, thinking out some fool thing, until you got into a state of exhaustion and fainted away one day. You don't do that way now. You are not letting your work fall off, are you, Worthington?"

His mighty exertion was ill rewarded. He almost blushed over the shout that came from the professor's chair. Alfred Worthington laughed all the more heartily because he was weary and unnerved. Two tears, fruits of unwonted mirth, stood in his eyes.

"It takes a man as lazy as you are, Warren," he observed, "to prod up hard-working creatures like myself. Go on! You never did an honest day's work in your life. You ought to be able to preach."

The two friends became reconciled over a game of chess. It lasted so long that Henry had to eat his dinner alone, for the combatants did not dine until half-past eight, when Benedict Warren was checkmated. After dinner they talked for two hours over the library fire, and Henry, in his room above, where he was not quite warm enough, suffered a feeling of neglect at being left out. Sounds of merriment floated up from the room below.

"They might at least let a man study," said Henry, bending his head nearer to the student lamp, over the closely printed pages of Böhm-Bawerk.

Henry's university record that winter was fine enough to satisfy even his father's standard. His father was only half conscious of this. Disapproving bitterly of this new side-issue in Henry's effort, he could not help thinking that, in his academic work, Henry was doing less than his best. To do less than one's best meant to Alfred Worthington failure. He could not see that the new human interest meant added power for his son. Henry exerted a peculiar influence over his students. The secret of it

was hard to detect. He did not preach. He did not dogmatize. When they asked him questions he sometimes answered. Sometimes he smiled and said: "That is interesting. Find out." Contact with him meant for them a compelling touch, calling forth power. Like steady flame in the boy's heart burned on the desire to rouse to finer intellectual life these sons of merchants and of easy-going professional men. The students were so well-fed, comfortable, muscular. Henry sometimes grasped the rounds of his chair in class with a strength that threatened to break the wooden rods. How could he waken these men to finer thought and feeling?

Slowly, and with pain, he cut his way through meshes of doubt in regard to his practical work in North Winthrop. Coming home one night after a slight fall of damp, clinging snow that gave fences, trees, and lawns an unreal beauty, and, with soft gleams of light from passing car or uncurtained window, made the whole world seem false and specious, he asked himself sharply why he was doing it all. Was it not a false quest anyway? Was it vanity or obstinacy that goaded him on? Did he wish to pose as more conscientious and more tender-hearted than other men? He turned his back on the unreal world of rose-colour and white, stamped the snow from his feet, and entered the hall. There was his father at work. Coming up behind him, Henry saw that the professor was poring with puzzled eyes over a printed report of a committee that had been investigating the sweating system. He hurriedly concealed the pamphlet under a text-book when he perceived that his son was near. Henry's face was working as he looked down at his father. Was there not a larger sprinkling of gray in the smooth dark hair than there had been? If there were any real occasion for tender-heartedness was it not here? What were the dictates of his conscience as compared with his father's peace of mind? He started to speak, checked himself, then sat down to his books.

Baser considerations became tempters for him. One sharp winter afternoon, as he passed the establishment of the Hon. Dwight B. Sanford, Winthrop's wealthiest trustee, the iron gate that guarded the drive swung open, and down the street flashed a splendid equipage. The owner sat erect amid the splendours of polished wood, priceless robes, and liveried servants. That, after all, Henry reflected, was success. What was he doing, except harm, with all his quixotic effort? The slow trotting of gentle-footed horses, soft cushions, a mansion like that to leave behind when one took one's drive — these things were tangible results of endeavour. Why not pander to owners of these things? Why not try to find some way of acquiring the fat rewards of this world? Success for him was to be such a lean and hungry thing. Then he squared his shoulders, ashamed of his wandering thoughts, and drew in a great breath of strong, pure, winter air. His footsteps rang out on the cold flagstones. Sunshine like that of this January day always conquers the world for one. He had put his hand to the plough. He could not turn back.

Every misgiving, as he reasoned it away, drove him farther and farther in the path that he had chosen. He was his father's son, with a trained intellectual conscience, and, like Alfred Worthington, was slow to conclude, but steady in conviction. He mastered his grievance about his father's neglect, ceasing to ask the old assurance that his sense of right was his father's too. No outside influence could help, he said to himself. He must be his own conviction embodied. He must make true for the world the truth that he wished to believe.

The mid-year tragedy was at hand in Winthrop: it was examination-time. An unnatural hush lay over the campus. Crowds of anxious faces gathered under a sky of unfeeling blue. Henry's soul was shaken to its very foundations. Sitting in judgment on these examination papers, he was compelled to decide whether honour or disgrace should be the verdict. His aye or no might deprive

a senior of a degree! For two days after the test Henry stayed in his own den upstairs. The floor was covered with manuscript. The table, sole object of furniture in the room, except two hard chairs, supported a pile of blue-books. He read until his eyes were dazed. Rereading caused only more complete bewilderment. Snaky lines of meaningless words writhed across page after page. The athletic youth with shaggy hair showed a sad academic record. The young professor sat at the table, both hands supporting his head, glancing up now and then at the ceiling as if praying for help. This fine mental hair-splitting had to decide the fate of his students, *his* students! The responsibility of separating the sheep from the goats was too heavy for mortal shoulders. Was God himself absolutely sure of his judgments?

At the end of the second day Henry emerged, with bloodshot eyes, and a fine wrinkle between his eyebrows. He strode down Wiclif Street with emphatic steps, entered the secretary's office, an ivy-covered building in the shelter of Mather Hall, and resolutely laid before him the brief list of the condemned. The gray-haired man looked up and smiled as Henry's voice broke over his brief remark, "Conditioned students in Economics 9 and 13."

"They get more hardened to it as the years go on," reflected the secretary.

Henry started for a walk across the river. Half-way over the bridge he met two of his victims, sauntering along with their hands in their pockets. The young professor bowed with a guilty and apologetic air. He felt like a criminal. Pacing up and down the bridge, he watched the noiseless water of the river, moving, full of dark shadows, toward the sea. A frosty red sunset gleamed behind the spires of the city, and electric cars made long lines of light. Henry thrust his hands into his pockets to warm his chilled fingers. The peace of final decision settled upon him at last. In an institution whose standard was fine effort and strenuous thought, condemnation of the lazy was just and

right. It was right, remembering what the stamp of Winthrop should mean to the world, even to draw visible lines between the stupid and those intellectually alert. Why did he take it all so personally? he asked himself. Other people did not. It was because they belonged to him, those students. They filled up, in a measure, the growing loneliness of his life. His father was casting him out into the cold. There was human interest in those young faces in his class-room. There was human interest in the smoky streets of North Winthrop, where he had shaken the grimy hands of working-men. He turned to face the factory-town. Into his mind floated the delicate shadow of a girl's face. It had haunted him all winter with its look of appeal, and this spot upon the bridge brought it back more vividly than ever. Yes, there in North Winthrop there was work to do, and in South Winthrop there was work to do. He turned and walked toward the university, longing for the sight of the familiar buildings. His students, his working-men, his *alma mater*, came to him as real persons, the touch of whose hands had been warm upon his. The face that was turned toward the university city was wistful, sympathetic, hungry. His mother's not-fully-retained love had been working all his life in his veins, for Henry was all his father and all his mother too.

He walked swiftly back across the common toward the buildings that meant so large a part of life to him: the library, with green moss upon its gray stones; the great brown-stone gateway with its exquisite carving; Quincy Hall, with snow still clinging to its roof. The young man's soul yearned toward the rest and the safety of those encompassing walls. There they stood, line upon line, rampart upon rampart, like the mountains about Jerusalem, an evidence of things assured. Oh, he had made mistakes, he had gone astray, he had missed the clew, yet the truth and the right did exist, and these walls were a witness to it. They stood for a law, for a coherence in things, the

very search for which was life enough. *Alma mater!* he could have curled up in her arms like a tired child. Suddenly he shivered. From a gateway near came sounds of revelry that was not innocent. Three students, walking unsteadily, were singing snatches of an indecent drinking song. He walked away. From Quincy Hall a different strain of music overtook him. Through the open windows floated out, in deep melody, a chorus of students' voices, lifting the great university-song. Henry took off his hat, alone in the moonlight, and waited until the last note had died away.

Ideals are easy to hold fast in the moonlight, to the sound of music. Benedict Warren, the day after Henry's walk, shook the young man's resolution to its very roots. Alfred Worthington's friend had at last taken up the cudgels in his defence. He had made cunning plans to find Henry alone, by accident. What he had to say he would say with an incidental air, advising him in an off-hand manner, as if the question were hardly worthy of thought on his side. For this purpose he lurked for several days about the common and Wiclif Street, watching for Henry. Finding this plan of no avail, he went one day to Lancaster Place, Ulysses at his heels. He had chosen an hour when he knew that the professor was in his class-room. Henry invited him to a seat in the library. To the boy's surprise and consternation Mr. Warren accepted. To Henry's further dismay he began talking of economics.

It was a fool subject, he observed, watching Henry from the corner of his eye. He did not wish to say anything unpleasant, but to him it seemed that people must be hard up for something to study when they took to reducing common-sense matters of concrete value into abstractions that had no corresponding realities. Suddenly he turned from his vague generalizations and faced the young man.

"Look here, Henry," he said, "you're making a con-

founded row, from what I've heard, about something that isn't worth snapping your fingers over. I believe you are trying to upset retail business in the city, and to keep the institution" — Warren pointed one lean finger in the direction where its buildings stood, "from getting funds. You'll find out some day that you can't run the whole business. Some things you can't help and you can't hinder. Hold your tongue —" the visitor's face gleamed with that rare smile of his — "hold your tongue, and it will all come right in the fall. What does political economy amount to anyway? I get all mine from Ulysses."

The great dog beat the floor with his tail in recognition of his honourable mention. Henry sat stiffly upright in his chair. He was angry.

"Where did you get your information?" he asked.

"From you and your father and the people around town," answered Warren, with a drawl.

"I'm doing nothing," said the young economist, "except to ask that the money we take shall be honest money."

"There isn't any such thing as honest money," retorted Mr. Warren. "Where can you draw the line between Gordon's gift—I believe that was what roused you up — and other gifts? Trade is trade, and it is all pretty much alike. Your hair-splitting considerations don't work in the world of buying and selling."

Henry was silent for a long time. Mr. Warren, apparently studying the wall-paper, watched with curiosity the changes in his companion's face.

"Maybe you are right," Henry said slowly. "That is only proof to me that it is time for us to begin to think about these things. It is a chance to challenge an abuse that never has been challenged. It may lead to thought that will result in some slight decrease of the weight of human misery. It seems to me that my demand is perfectly sane and reasonable. It is only this: that donors of gifts to institutions like this shall have clean hands. That means simply, honesty in business, and fair play to

the human beings in their employ. I do not agree with you. I think that it is possible to draw the line."

A gleam of unwilling admiration came from Benedict Warren's eyes. He tried another scheme.

"Have you thought about your father?" he asked. "It wouldn't matter if it weren't for him, but I think that this is using him all up. Do you know what happened the other day?"

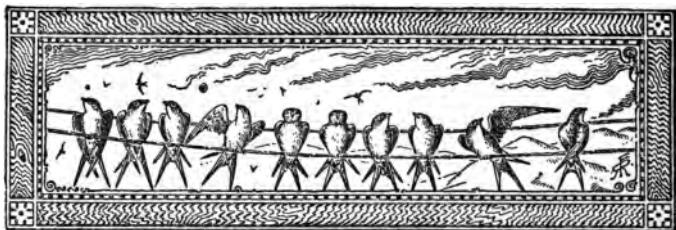
"No," answered Henry.

"One of his old fainting spells came on. It's a long time since he's had one. We had been taking a walk, and I managed to get him into the den. I don't know whether it's your fault, but I advise you to take in sail a little."

"I'm doing nothing," said Henry, proudly, "but what my conscience demands." Mr. Warren rose to his feet with a jerk. Even Ulysses had never seen him move so rapidly.

"Confound your conscience!" he said, stalking away. "I presume you think that it's a thing of vast importance. I tell you it's of mighty little account, compared with your father's health. Some people think their souls vastly more important than they are."

Henry folded his arms upon the table, and bowed his head upon them in silent misery.



CHAPTER XIV



R. GORDON and his daughter were very good to each other that winter. As they shared their Sunday dinner of cold roast turkey, or sat side by side in the parlour through the evening in companion plush chairs, they watched each other with uneasy eyes, eyes that asked nothing, save knowledge of the full measure of duty to be done under present circumstances. Mouth and chin answered the questioning eyes with determination to perform the whole. The grim Covenanter faces on the wall, looking down on the gray head and the brown one under the piano lamp, seemed to be coming to life again. Annice, unknown to herself, was at last acquiring the family expression.

She did her duty, scrupulously, untiringly. Antigone was not more firmly resolved. No matter how early her father breakfasted, she was there, bravely trying to smile at him from behind the monumental coffee-pot. She ordered the meals, each time indirectly asking the cook what to order, and then performing her part with dignity which imposed entirely on that warm-hearted Irishwoman. It did beat all, she said, to see what a head Miss Annice had for housekeeping. Annice supervised the arrangement of the rooms, and replenished the linen closet. Her father's

heart swelled with pride when he saw her hemstitching a towel. She attended to her father's collars, and was as faithful in remembering his favourite pickles as he was in remembering, on Sunday, which part of the turkey she liked. In the evenings the girl was always ready, in her pretty gowns of pale summer colours, or of vivid scarlet—they were equally becoming—to entertain her father. His abstract idea of a daughter in the home could not have been better exemplified.

Yet he missed something. On the afternoon of her return Annice had apologized for her rash words at Smith's. She had been meek, subdued, dutiful. Still he had constantly the old feeling that he had had in regard to her mother. Something eluded him. He dictated her walks, her drives, the hour for her retiring, and her attendance at church; but he wanted to know what she was thinking about when she looked away over the marshes where pale dead grass stood motionless above the snow. He was irritated because he could not control both her feelings and her thoughts.

He had pardoned her. The somewhat explosive expression of this had been one of the masterpieces of his histrionic paternity. For days afterward he had worn that slightly hurt, but magnanimous, expression that always came to his face when he was conscious of having done somebody wrong. He invariably forgave his victims. Looking across his lawn late that afternoon of his visit at Smith's he had seen Annice coming slowly up the walk in the red-gold haze of an Indian summer sunset, Annice, tired and dejected, her hair straying about her face, her worn ulster only half concealing her limp black gown. He had gone out to meet her, saying to himself, "And his father saw him far off," and trying to think whether or not this line formed part of the parable of the prodigal son.

She had walked straight to him and had looked up into his face as he stood on the steps above her. It was one

of the minutes when he was half afraid of her, because her eyes looked so much like the eyes of his mother.

"I have come to beg your pardon," she said, her chin quivering in strong emotion, "for — this afternoon. I did not mean," she hesitated, "to say it that way."

He had waited, his hand half stretched out as if to give her his blessing. To the cook who had watched from the conservatory window it had been a minute of intense dramatic interest, and not to the cook alone. Further expression of penitence for the sin of leaving her father's house in that way had not come, and yet he had forgiven her. He had taken his daughter's hand, and had led her into her deserted home. A sense of her misdeeds would come to her in time.

It had not come. The subtle reminders that her father had given her had passed unheeded. He had told stories of erring youth and of forgiving parents. Mute indifference, or even a glance of levity, had been his reward. At prayers one morning he had read the commandments, pausing over, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land." As Annice had risen from her knees he had been shocked to see a faint smile flicker over her face. He had expected something else.

"My days are very long now," Annice was saying to herself, "quite long enough."

All winter he was constantly active in making plans for her pleasure. Dimly, from a long distance, he saw himself performing this and that act in the character of grieved and loving father. He read aloud to her in the evenings. He was fond of reading aloud, though impatient and restless if obliged to listen to any one else. Night after night he exercised this cruellest form of human tyranny upon his patient daughter. Sitting at one side of the marble-topped table, he rolled out in his full, insistent voice, that knew no variation, no inflection, page after page of Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help*, of the lives of Lincoln and Grant; on Sunday, of Chalmers's *Sermons*. Annice, at the other side

of the table, busy with embroidery of white linen and gold-coloured silk, wove crooked patterns among the meshes of flowers, and now and then, when the misery was too great to bear, pricked her finger in order to change the seat of suffering, and left a tiny red blot on the white. She understood now the way in which the Inquisition had tortured people to death by making water fall, drop after drop, upon their heads. Meanwhile she watched for the minutes when her father's eyes were lifted. She always tried to meet him with an appreciative smile.

Besides staying at home as much as was possible, in order to keep his daughter from being lonely, Mr. Gordon spent much time in thinking out other kinds of entertainment for her. She was young, he often told her, and she ought to have amusement. Just how a suitable launching into society was to come, he did not see. Annice's perversity about church work was a direct barrier. He wondered fretfully why Mrs. Appleton showed no signs of renewing the old intimacy. Had he not sent Annice to the school she had recommended? Had she not, on those occasional meetings with Annice in the summer, bestowed her patronage upon the girl? Now that his daughter had come to make Winthrop her home, Mrs. Appleton ignored her existence. He took Annice to church with him—she, fair to look upon, with her face shining out from her dark seal furs; he, in the full glory of black broadcloth and glistening hat. It was a pity that their church was not Mrs. Appleton's, he often thought. Annice was induced as often as was possible to go driving with him on the boulevard in the afternoons. He liked to have people see the perfect concord existing between himself and his daughter. He observed that at church and on the street they attracted much attention. People looked at one another, smiled, and whispered when they saw them. Mr. Gordon was deeply gratified.

Meanwhile the girl lived on in the great house on the hill, feeling that her soul was frozen, like the frozen world

outside. Those endless days of glaring sunshine on white snow seemed to belong to the world of the dead rather than to the world of the living. The loneliness of the huge rooms was unendurable. After the bright school life of crowded human interests, had followed silence and a blank. Winter had come to Winthrop with a severity unknown before, ushered in by a storm that had left a heavy drift of unbroken white over the dreary marshes, and had brought upon the beach driftwood from wrecked ships, and stiffened bodies of drowned men. Ships had gone down in Winthrop harbour on the night of the great gale. Annice, looking from the window at the world of gray, watched snowfall after snowfall, flake after flake on the bare branches of beech and maple, and on the brown leaves that clung still to the oaks. To the solitary and imprisoned girl, it looked as if every trace of the brown earth with its growing things and its warm human lives was to be blotted out into white silence.

The winds of December and of January beat on the stunted hemlocks and cedars that clung to the rocks. Land and sea were cold and stern. Yet there came days when nature relented, days of sunshine and of thaw along the winter coast. Then, when the sky was blue behind the evergreens on the cliff, and the water trickled slowly down from melting ice between the rocks, Annice would venture out to walk along the shore. The relief of escape from her troubled mind into the beauty of the outside world was pleasure that was almost pain. There was peace in the long horizon line where sky and water met.

Sometimes her problems followed her, and darkened sea and sky. Then it seemed as if the waves were tossing ceaselessly in trouble; and the wind-blown hemlocks wore an expression of agony, as if they were feeling down between the rocks for something firm to cling to, something that was not there. The hoarse cry of the gulls and the cynic cawing of the crows were as an expression of her own hurt. For existence was to the girl only pain. She had asked for

more light on life, and had received greater darkness. The evidence in regard to her father's wrong-doing had become, through her rash experiment, convincing, yet it brought her, instead of constant indignation, a growing conviction that her pity for all the world should not shut her father out. The hunger and thirst of her own loneliness made her gentle in the thought of the pathetic isolation of his life.

One February day Annice sat in a sheltered cleft of the rocks, watching the glitter of sunshine on the waves. She had turned up the deep fur collar of her coat, half concealing her face, which was pink with the cold. It was foolish to sit there. She knew it, but what did it matter? After all, the sunshine was almost warm. She took off her heavy gloves and spread her fingers out to let it drive away the chill. A voice above her head startled her.

"Come this way, Hayes," it said quickly.

Fear sent scarlet colour to the girl's lips and cheeks and forehead. The voice stirred her. She did not need to look at the two people out on the rocks, near the breaking of the waves. There stood the young investigator. She could see the outline of his broad shoulders and strong profile against the sea. That yellow-haired boy in blue at his side was her Freshman cousin, Allan Hayes. Annice did not stop to wonder at this. She was asking herself if her eyes played her false. Again and again the outline of a passing figure had deceived her, taking the form of her unknown friend. A great wave of gladness and relief swept over her. The only person who seemed to think as she thought, the only person she could perfectly trust, was actually there, standing near her, and yet so far away. She leaned farther back among the rocks, and waited until the sound of retreating footsteps, ringing on the stones, made her sure that they had gone. Then she rose, and clambered out over the rocks to the place where they had been standing.

The wind blew her hair about her bright face, and made little ripples in her fur coat. The incoming waves dashed

drops of cold spray upon her gown. Above her head the gulls were calling to one another in happy fellowship. Annice was conscious of nothing except that she was cold, desolate, unhelped. But the sight of that face had roused her more than she was aware to her old sense of right. She had lived all winter without once suggesting to her father that her conviction in regard to his business was still at variance with his. Penitence had made her a coward. She would talk with him, reasonably, not in anger as she had done before, and he, too, would be reasonable. It was time to go home for dinner, but the girl was loath to go. She blew softly on her fingers to keep them warm. A boy with scarlet mittens and scarlet stockings passed, looking curiously toward her. He lived in the settlement of oystermen's houses on the left, and he was going home from school to get his dinner. Presently a woman came from the opposite direction. She was carrying a little child whose head nestled in the hollow of her shoulder. Something in the curve of the arm folded round the baby smote Annice to the heart with the full sense of her forlornness, and she stood shivering in the cold, watching hungrily, as long as she could see them, the mother and child upon the winter rocks.

"Father," she said that night, when he had at last closed the book he had been reading to her, and the blessed boon of silence had come for a minute, "I want to ask something about your — about Smith's."

The voice that had started out so bravely broke as she saw the hardening of her father's face. His lips were slightly open. Cheeks, mouth, and forehead looked as if they had been graven with a fine tool upon thrice-tempered steel. Annice folded her embroidery and went bravely on.

"If you knew the actual conditions in that shop," she said, "I am sure that you would not let it go on a day. Couldn't you begin by raising the cash-girls' wages, and then gradually abolish existing abuses? I know it would pay in the end."

The hard blue eyes frightened her. Mr. Gordon was considering how gentle and impressionable his daughter looked. This streak of perversity must be crushed out of her, and now was the time.

"Annice," he remarked, bringing his hands together like a vice, "you have done enough this winter to make my life a burden to me. It isn't sufficient that you have publicly insulted me. You have disgraced the honour of the Gordon name, and made your own a byword on street-corners. I ask you in future to attend to your conduct and not to mine, and to try to live down what you have already done. Smith's shall remain in every particular as it is."

The girl was not crushed. She did not even change colour at the insinuation. She gazed steadily at her father until he turned away. Then she looked at the carpet, meditating. Her voice was gentle when she spoke again.

"I don't know what you mean," she said. "If I have disgraced you, I am sorry. I have done nothing I am ashamed of. I want to say something that I have been thinking about for a long time. If the business goes on in all those places as it has always done, I must try to support myself in some way. I cannot take that money."

Her father's words had stung her to the quick. What did he mean, she asked herself, as she lay awake that night and watched the moonlight touching the foolish picture of the little girl in blue, foolish, but inexpressibly dear because of the donor. The girl forgot the harsh statements that her father had made. She was thinking of her mother, of that long last illness in the room downstairs. The patient face upon the pillows was more vividly real to Annice than were the people she talked with day by day. She could not forget it, nor could she forget it as it had looked in the coffin, still tired, as if even death could not bring rest and peace.

"Mother!" cried the girl, sharply, in the silence of mid-

night, "mother!" She sat up in bed, her arms clasped round her knees, shivering with cold.

There had been more reason than Annice had dreamed for those sharp words her father had said. A great anxiety harassed Mr. Gordon. The second morning after his daughter's return he had been startled by a paragraph in the paper. It was about the disappearance of one of the shop-girls at Smith's. She had gone out as usual when the shop had closed at night, but she had not returned.

"My daughter, *my* daughter!" Mr. Gordon had murmured to himself, yet not without a spectator. "Think of the disgrace!"

He had watched the papers carefully. After a second item, giving the report of the matron of the Merton Home, he had found nothing further. He had hoped that the truth would lie concealed, as it was often fitting for the truth to do. But meanwhile, reports had spread through the city. The fellow-clerks of Annie Whitney had seen her driving with Mr. Gordon on Sunday. Mr. Smith, the manager, became interested, looked up the matter, and found the secret of relationship between his employer and the former shop-girl at Smith's. The majority of employees at Smith's were loyal to the girl, whose sweetness had won them, but a few remembered that she had been from the first a suspicious character. She had asked too many questions. She had accepted notes from customers. She had treated the girl who liked chocolate with whipped cream to too expensive a luncheon for a shop-girl to give. The scandal connected with so prominent a name as that of Mr. Gordon crept over to South Winthrop, and was whispered through gauze veils on the streets, spoken aloud over cups of afternoon tea. The secret of Mr. Gordon's connection with Smith's had become public property. The statement of this, and of his daughter's sojourn there as clerk made an interesting item for Winthrop's one society journal. Mr. Gordon had received a marked copy on the

day preceding Annice's renewal of the old discussion about Smith's.

For Annice, the shock of discovery in regard to these things was delayed by illness. She was suffering from an attack of slow fever. The family physician had ordered her to bed.

"Been drinking bad water?" he had asked, on the occasion of his first visit. "It looks as if you had sometime been exposed to unsanitary conditions. Germs will lie dormant in the system for months and then come to life."

The eyes of father and daughter met with a look of understanding. His were full of reproach.

"It is no more for me than for the others," said Annice, putting her hand to her fever-flushed cheeks.

A trained nurse watched over the great bed in the girl's room. She was not dangerously ill, but Mr. Gordon was paralyzed with fear. He wandered about the house, torn between anxiety about the girl's health and anguish regarding the family respectability. He could see suspicion in the inquiries made about the girl by elderly ladies who had known her mother. One, in an antiquated black bonnet and mitts, said that sickness and death meant sometimes sparing us greater trials. This was too much to bear! He haunted the sick-room, neglecting his business, and he helped care for his daughter with a gentleness that surprised the girl. Sometimes he thought of her criticism of him with a feeling that was not entirely condemnation, yet he did not condemn himself. A disapproving conscience would have been a contradiction in terms in the Gordon family. So he watched with wistful eyes at the foot of his daughter's bed for physical improvement and for mental change in her.

For one brief period Annice was delirious. In her dream she was haunted by sights and sounds from her recent experience. She was in the shop again, with the toys about her. Suddenly the walls opened, and she and

her father were standing side by side at the judgment-seat. The careful literalness of her childhood's teaching came back in vivid spectacular pictures. God sat upon a great white throne, and called her father to him. He spoke no word, but pointed to a place among those on his left hand, and her father turned to go, old, gray-haired, pathetic. Then Annice in her dream sprang forward, crying, "Father!" Mr. Gordon heard and gave thanks that the bed of illness was being used to bring his erring daughter to a sense of right.

In the days of Annice's convalescence, he was deeply gratified to see Mrs. Appleton's carriage under his portecochère. He drew a great sigh of relief and went into the dining room to wait until he was asked for. The sight of her elegant black costume was enough to console him partially for the sting of that item in the society journal. He studied the harness and the coachman's livery through the dining-room window while Mrs. Appleton was upstairs in the sick-room. Two or three points he resolved to copy in his own equipage. The bay ponies, he observed with satisfaction, were not so fine as his own.

A chance remark from an acquaintance the day before had roused Mrs. Appleton to hasty action. She had entered the library and startled her brother from drowsy contemplation of Maeterlinck.

"Virgil," she said, panting still from the rapid ascent of the steps, "have you heard anything about Annice Gordon's running away from home?"

The faintest possible change of colour rippled over Mr. Penrose's face. He had been expecting this! Poor Annice!

"Heard?" he asked gently, after a minute's hesitation. "No, I have heard nothing."

He bent his eyes again upon his book. Mrs. Appleton gave him one withering glance on leaving the room.

"If Virgil only had a little practical interest in human beings, we could get along better," she remarked to her-

self. "Why should I have a brother who is only an *édition de luxe*?"

Upstairs in her own sitting-room she fell to thinking. Annice had been on her conscience this winter. She had really meant to bring the girl out on her return from Florida, but the thought of Mr. Gordon had deterred her. There had always been question about the social possibilities of these people, and now, if Annice had made a fool of herself in any way, it was impossible. Mrs. Appleton rose to throw off her wraps. Then her eye lighted on the picture of her little daughter Frances, and she recalled the days when these two children, still wearing short skirts and with their hair in long braids, had played about her lawn. She could see now the sunshine and shadow on their pretty heads. Frances had loved that little girl, and Frances had always had her own way. She had brought the slender, frightened little creature home with her from school. Then it had been easy, for Mrs. Gordon was an invalid, and Mr. Gordon was too busy for society — but now? Mrs. Appleton's face grew soft. Whatever madness little Annice had indulged in, she was innocent. Mischievous she might be, but guilty of anything that might mean disgrace, never! The great lady squared her shoulders, and the heavy silk of her gown creaked under her fur wrap. She would stand as a wall of protection between that child and the world, and she had a well-justified feeling that nothing could batter her down. There would even be a certain pleasure in bringing the girl home with her, thus defying the condemnation of Winthrop. So she ordered her carriage and drove out to Winthrop Heights.

Annice was sitting by an open window, in the sweet air of the soft spring day. There was a touch of life in the wind that stirred the curtains. Only patches of snow were left on the brown marshes, and, out beyond, the sea was blue. The physical weakness of her first days of recovery had left her indifferent to everything except the number of rose-

buds on the wall-paper. With added strength she had outgrown that interest, and had watched with untiring eyes the march of spring days over the sea. She greeted her visitor with a little cry of welcome.

"I have come to take you home with me," said Mrs. Appleton, impulsively, touched by the hollows in the girl's cheeks. "Will you come?"

"Yes, please," said Annice, with a sigh of relief.

Mrs. Appleton drew a chair to the girl's side and grasped the slender hands in her own.

"Now tell me when and how and why you ran away from home."

Annice did. The lady listened with the charity that she would have bestowed upon any school-girl escapade, and with utter lack of comprehension of the motive.

"You poor child," she said compassionately, "you haven't any mother. Now tell me what you've been doing since November, besides being sick?"

"Taking care of father," said Annice. "That's what I came home to do."

"Well, you've certainly found a new way of making home happy," observed Mrs. Appleton, thinking of the scandal to be lived down. "Here, call your maid and get ready. I'll go down and see your father."

The fresh air outside made Annice's pulses throb with a sense of coming life. The ponies trotted swiftly down the hill. In the joy of escape the girl's eyes shone, then, looking back, she saw her father standing erect and alone on the verandah. Her conscience smote her and her eyes clouded.

"Oh dear!" she sighed. "I oughtn't to leave him. I wish I knew what to do."

But Mrs. Appleton had observed the deep satisfaction with which Mr. Gordon had consented to his daughter's visit.

"Tuck the robes round you, my dear," she said dryly, "and then perhaps your next duty will become clearer."



CHAPTER XV



It was ebb-tide with Professor Penrose. A constant sense of slipping, of losing grasp, possessed him. He read aloud to his sister and to Annice — Annice had been with them now for two weeks — and he chose subdued literature, Arnold's poems, *Obermann*, *Amiel*. There was a melancholy pleasure in sitting in the evenings by the smouldering library fire in the girl's presence, and gliding, with falling cadences, over sentences, each of which marked a loss, a letting go. His was a mood of failure, and the tide's "melancholy, long-withdrawing roar" was echoed in his bosom. Sometimes Mrs. Appleton, listening with her head comfortably resting on the back of her chair, her plump hands folded in her lap, suggested that she was tired of consumptive literature, and that she would like something with a tonic quality in it, an old fighting ballad, or a bit of Homer. Her brother complied with her request, reluctantly. Barbaric emotions had little charm for him.

Always, as he read, he lifted his eyes between the sentences to watch Annice. He noticed that she never listened. As he began, the troubled look came into her eyes, and she gazed at the coals, her mind far away. The sight brought him a twinge of mild pain. It was the pathos of the change, the thought of this richly gifted mind over-

thrown, that moved him, for he detected in her eyes the vagueness of lunacy. That sensitive nature had been too exquisite to stand the jars of this harsh world. In these moments pitying tenderness changed his feeling to a fatherly one. Unobtrusively he would guard her. Unwatched, he would bestow upon her all the care, changed, alas! — that he had dreamed his right. Yet he clung to the thought of this slowly receding emotion. It was the last time of vivid feeling that would come to him, he said to himself, the last keen sensation he would know as he went on toward the gathering shadow. And he wanted to realize its utmost power before it took its place among the gray mists of old feelings that made a perpetual tender atmosphere in his mind. Warm and bright it had shot through them, giving them the glory of a sunset radiance. Now only the gray end of sunset was his.

He would not marry her. He had decided that irrevocably. Pity for her sometimes stormed his resolution as he saw in her face the pleading look of one who begs for guidance and for protection. He beat his misgivings bravely back. She needed, he confessed to himself, the support of his strong hand, but it was impossible. This sufficing explanation of insanity, the kindest he could give, of course rendered all thought of marriage wrong. Any other explanation wounded so cruelly that better part of his soul, his taste, that he fought the idea back as unworthy of himself and of her. Meanwhile, a brotherly oversight was possible in this hard situation which Juliette, unconscious of her cruelty, had arranged. No look, no motion of the girl escaped him. At their first meeting the pallor of her forehead, the slight thinness of her cheeks, had been like the touch of pleading fingers, reaching for help. Through all the days between he had seen her colour coming back, and the old merriment gleamed now and then in her eyes. He had revelled in her beauty, emphasized by the cut and the colour of her gowns. The old-rose house-dress was the one he liked best, but the dull

blue with its touch of gold was almost as enticing. The vision of Annice at the head of his table still haunted him, no longer as a dream that would come true, but as a temptation. Her very pathos was an allurements. The deepened look of seriousness in eyes and mouth, that sadness which had been a fleeting expression, but was constant now, gave added charm. It was hard to renounce all this by sheer will-force.

One afternoon he strolled into the drawing-room and found his sister by her tea-tray waiting for chance visitors. Annice was standing by the window, wearing, he noted with satisfaction, the rose-coloured gown.

"Ophelia!" he murmured, under his breath, and then,

" 'Forty thousand brothers
Could not with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum.' "

For a moment he felt that this was true.

"What did you say, Virgil?" asked Mrs. Appleton, turning toward him. She was expensively arrayed in a black dress trimmed with jet. A drive earlier in the afternoon had sharpened the brightness of her eyes, and had deepened the solid colour of her cheeks.

"I was going to say," observed Mr. Penrose, "that I have taken the liberty to invite to your tea-table a Western friend of mine whom I am longing to have you meet."

"An old friend?" asked the lady.

"A friend of day before yesterday," replied her brother. He was strolling up and down over the soft carpet, his hands clasped behind him, a look of abstraction on his face. "I have met him but once. He is a type. The name is Stubbs, Martin Luther Stubbs."

The professor lingered with relish over the name. He was about to make a further remark when Alfred Worthington was ushered into the room. Soon after him came Annice's Freshman cousin, Allan Hayes, abashed at finding himself in the presence of the learned scientist who had

written two books, and who was the father of his favourite instructor. Annice came forward from the corner by the window, and joined the circle by the table. She was painfully conscious of the anxious scrutiny with which her hostess's brother watched her movements. She half divined the cause, and a gleam of amusement sometimes flickered across her lips. What other explanation could he give for that minute's terrible interview at Smith's?

Both Mr. Penrose and his sister liked to have people drop in for five-o'clock tea. The sanctity of this custom in their household could not have been surpassed in any English establishment. The service was conducted in the English way, with cups and saucers and thin bread and butter brought in on a tray by a maid in cap and apron. No ostentatious tea-table with souvenir spoons, no vulgar sweets, for Mrs. Appleton! She used the heavy, battered silver tea-pot, the thin, old-fashioned spoons of her ancestors. Impressive in many offices, she was nowhere else so impressive as in this. She sat in the high-backed, carved oak chair that had belonged to her remotely great-grandfather, the governor of the state. She conversed volubly as she poured the beverage into her thin old cups, decorated with lilac flowers touched with gilt. It was a time of intense enjoyment for her. The interested faces of her guests, the warm colour of the furnishings in the room, the family portraits on the wall, modern in feature and in drapery, all seemed converted into one harmonious whole by the fragrance of her tea.

Mr. Penrose sighed this afternoon as he sipped his tea in the chastened manner that was all his own. He permitted Juliette and Annice to bear the burden of entertainment to-day, and he gave himself up to silent enjoyment. He was always present at this function, though the point of view of his appreciation was different from his sister's. He regretted a little her insistence upon ancestral honours, and her constant harping upon colonial possessions and colonial virtues. For him the past stretched farther back,

and with a broader sweep. The art, life, literature of England were his inheritance. Nothing brought back to him so vividly as this five-o'clock hour those years at Oxford when he had felt his identity with England most complete. This faint fragrance of tea made real to sense the open windows, the smooth-shaven lawns, the gray stone towers with their climbing ivy, all the "sweet city with her dreaming spires." He could see her slow rivers creeping under willow branches through those meadows of English green; he could breathe the sweetness of those hawthorn hedges. For a few moments he lived again in the one spot where his soul had found an abiding-place in a rough world.

The conversation to-day ran upon Winthrop, its old life, its customs, its ideals. Many a quaint bit of history concerning the institution that had formed so large a part of his life was stored up in Alfred Worthington's mind. Many an ancestral anecdote was forthcoming from Mrs. Appleton. Allan Hayes listened with breathless interest, the bright red of his cheeks deepening in the excitement of the moment. Annice listened, a smile on her lips, the questioning sadness still in her eyes. Professor Penrose listened, watching the colour-effect of those two heads together, Annice's and the boy's, but always on the alert, ready, at any sign of recurrence of that tragic malady, to lead the girl from the room. The duet of Professor Worthington and his hostess lingered over the old etiquette of the college, when seniors were required to remove their hats within fifteen feet of the president, freshmen at thirty feet; when all were commanded to keep due silence in the presence of magistrates, elders, doctors, and tutors; when every scholar was "called by his sirname, except he were son of a nobleman, or a Knit's eldest son." They all smiled over the requirements when students were forbidden to use the English tongue in their rooms, being commanded in public and private to use "lattin." Just here an instructor in the Latin department was ushered in, and

he took his place with a gratifying sense of the warmth and comfort and beauty of the scene. The subject of discussion changed. This young scholar, justly proud of his acquaintance with Paulus Diaconus, Johannes Diaconus, and the rest, started to lead the conversation through perilous mediæval paths where Mrs. Appleton could follow only with a forced smile of intelligence, "faint, yet pursuing." Ignorance of anything was hard for her to confess. She was trying to lead the speaker back to safer and more familiar ground, when Henry Worthington entered the room.

For some reason that no one could explain, his coming was like an electric shock. Mr. Penrose saw, with nervous anxiety, that the colour faded from Annice Gordon's face, leaving her lips white. Then a look of terror came, and she gazed at the newcomer with piteous eyes. Alfred Worthington was distressed beyond measure by his son's bearing. He greeted his hostess almost curtly. That simple, direct manner was too abrupt. Was it his fault, the father asked himself, that Henry at times seemed to lack polish? Had he failed, being only a man, and unfitted for the task, to train his son to a sense of the nice shades of demeanour? Here he stood, almost staring at Miss Gordon. A sense that his life had been a failure weighed like lead upon the professor's heart.

"It is strange that you have never met," Mrs. Appleton was saying, as she presented the young man to Annice. "You have both, however, spent much time away from Winthrop. This is the youngest of our university professors. Miss Gordon is the daughter of one of our trustees."

Annice was helpless in the grasp of an awful moment. Every eye in the room was fixed upon her, and she knew it.

"I have heard of Mr. Worthington from my cousin, Allan Hayes," she stammered. "He has told me about," — her mind wandered in search of the word she had lost — "your toys."

Professor Penrose averted his eyes. They were moist. Oh, the pity of it! Mad, mad, mad! Mrs. Appleton concealed a look of blank astonishment by turning to arrange her cups and saucers. The freshman smiled. He, too, was afraid of young Mr. Worthington, and he could understand being as rattled as that. Only, he was jolly after you got to know him. A look of uneasiness settled down over Alfred Worthington's face. No one but Henry's father had seen the glance of swift recognition, of mutual understanding, that had passed between his son and this strange young lady.

Henry came to the rescue. After that first astonished glance his face did not betray, by the quivering of a muscle, his surprise in finding in Mrs. Appleton's drawing-room the girl he had left in her calico gown upon the bridge. Yet that figure had wandered through his dreams all winter. Unconsciously he had watched for her up and down the streets and on Winthrop bridge. In a nightmare he had seen her pursued by a snarling beast, and he had sprung forward to rescue her, waking, before the moment of deliverance came, with a sense of having failed some one who needed him. And here was this oppressed working-girl, in a dress of bewildering beauty, helping Mrs. Appleton receive on her day at home. He treated her extraordinary remark as if it had been the most natural bit of social commonplace.

"Is Allan Hayes your cousin?" he asked. "He is one of my brightest boys."

Turning, he met a beaming smile upon his pupil's face.

"What, are you here, Hayes?" he said. "I hope you didn't catch that remark of mine."

"Allan says," observed Annice, with a great effort at control, "that if it weren't for your class he shouldn't be obliged to study at all. Now he has to work two hours a week."

"Two hours a week," groaned Henry Worthington, with a smile. "And I toil eight hours a day for them!"

The smile faded as he became aware of the embarrassment that prevailed in the room. For the first time in Mrs. Appleton's career as hostess, nobody knew what to do or say. Henry's mind was in a rage of excitement. Who was this girl? How could she be Mr. Gordon's daughter? Why was she here? Annice, industriously conversing with the young Latin scholar, glanced at Henry Worthington with terror that was not all terror. In spite of the danger, she felt safe. Mr. Penrose was talking bravely, conspicuously, about the compelling charm which a great institution like this often had for the solitary individual. He knew a case, he remarked, removing his gold eye-glasses, and blinking as the light touched his unprotected eyes, in which the college had meant to a man all there was in life worth holding to. He had failed as instructor, as president's secretary, as type-writer. Now, idle and poorly clad, he clung to the very shadow of the buildings that had meant his life's passion —

Mr. Penrose paused. He was painfully conscious that everybody was listening to him, and that nobody was interested. Juliette's eyes were fixed upon the fast-coming colour in Annice's face. That gaze might precipitate matters! The professor rose, approached his sister, and, bending to speak to her, carefully tipped over two cups and the hot-water jug, hastily apologizing. He was successful. Juliette's attention was indeed diverted. She rescued the jug, and gave her brother one of her severest smiles.

"You oughtn't to live with anything more breakable than a *pensée*, Virgil," she remarked.

It was with a sigh of relief that the host turned to meet Mr. Stubbs, who had just entered the room, and was gazing about it with evident curiosity. He was a tall, lean individual, with hawk-like profile, and bright, inquiring, hawk-like eyes. His business suit of gray looked worn and old. His thin, grasping hands moved restlessly all the time, as if seeking for something to do.

"I've been looking at the images off the Parthenon," he said, as he sank into his chair, after bestowing a nod upon his hostess. "This morning I had chapel, Greek, art, history, mathematics; this afternoon, library and museum. You have to keep moving if you are going to take it all in."

Mrs. Appleton conversed most affably with the stranger. Her lips twitched as she saw the look of blank astonishment upon Professor Worthington's face. Mr. Stubbs refused tea. That was for women, he said. At the end of five minutes he unblushingly took out his watch, remarked that he must be going, and disappeared.

"A protégé of mine," observed Mr. Penrose, "from Omaha. He came to hear me lecture, last Wednesday, but left before my remarks were half over. He wanted to visit a class in mineralogy for the rest of the hour. I meet him everywhere. He goes to hear everybody and to see everything. You find him in the library improving, with books, the fifteen-minute period between appointments. You find him at every conceivable lecture taking notes. I'm immensely interested in him. He is a new type, and yet it is a type as old as Shakespeare, the pathetic-comic."

"I presume that he is trying to achieve in one winter all that past generations did not do for him," remarked Mrs. Appleton.

"The boys say he is hustling for culture," said Allan Hayes, shyly.

Professor Worthington was deeply hurt.

"It is the hardest thing a man has to bear," he observed, with something almost like a scowl, "this kind of scholastic dissipation. America, especially Western America, has yet to learn that a little information about many things is much worse than no learning at all. Scholarship here has no worse foe than this tendency to start out in half a dozen lines of work at once, and drop them all."

Alfred Worthington did not know it, but he was talking at Henry. Henry, conversing with his pupil, was trying

to control his wandering eyes. If he looked out of the window, some article of furniture near it attracted his glance, and that article proved a direct pathway to Miss Gordon. If he examined a book, he lifted his eyes in trying to get a better light on it, and his eyes encountered a fleeing glance from hers. Somewhere in an inmost being that he had never yet discovered he was conscious of every movement she made, whether he saw it or not. Wrestling his gaze from the spot where she was sitting, he encountered his father's glance, and heard that father observing to Mr. Penrose:—

“The methods of our age fill me with pride. To arrive anywhere a man must choose his narrow line of work, the narrower the better, and follow it unfalteringly to the end. The mental discipline of that mere concentration is of incalculable value.”

Henry resented that grieved look in his father's eyes. Ranking the practical problems of his science as mental dissipation seemed to him prejudiced and unfair. Then, thinking of his father still, his eyes travelled back to Miss Gordon again, for Alfred Worthington had turned to her as he had risen to go, and was speaking to her of his acquaintance with her father.

“I trust you are not one of the young ladies, Miss Gordon,” he observed, “who are trying to gain entrance into our university.”

“Never!” said Annice, laughing. “There are so many more interesting things to do.”

Mrs. Appleton looked across the little group of people, standing to take their leave.

“Heaven forfend!” she exclaimed. “Miss Gordon may do a great many foolish things”—here Penrose and Henry both looked guilty, and turned their eyes away—“but she will never do anything so foolish as that. What is the use,” demanded Mrs. Appleton, folding her hands at her waist, “of women trying to pretend that they have brains? Words light on their lips and they use them

without the slightest idea of what their meaning is. I heard a woman lecturer the other day explaining to an English lady one use of the phrase, 'survival of the fittest.' 'I don't know how you use it on the other side of the water,' she remarked, 'but here in America we mean the survival of the truly noble.'"

Mrs. Appleton's lengthy remarks had given Henry one precious minute face to face with Miss Gordon.

"Why did you do it?" he asked simply, gazing at her now with no feeling of self-rebuke.

"To find out about things," said Annice, looking up at him with serious and honest eyes. An inexpressible feeling of relief was making atonement to the girl for the sense of disgrace that had cut her to the soul, for Mrs. Appleton's amused charity, for Mr. Penrose's chilly toleration. Mr. Worthington was speaking the first words that suggested the possibility of any one's understanding her. Her eyes pleaded for sympathy, and she got it.

"It was the same thing you were trying to do," she continued after a little pause, "only I had other reasons for wanting to know, and I took another way to find out."

Henry was silent. The girl's colour was changing as if some imprisoned flame were burning its way out in flashes through her face. In her bright gown she looked, with her white forehead and shining eyes, like a spirit incarnate, a symbol of the aspiration of his strong youth.

"Those people suffer so," said Annice, her lips quivering.

"And you care, that way?" asked Henry, in a whisper.

The look that passed between them was full of the sympathy of a common hope.



CHAPTER XVI



N the night of Saturday, the eighth of April, the employees of Smith's stood in little groups, waiting for their wages. It was five minutes before six, and the shop was ready for closing. Long brown cloths had been spread over the counters. The shades were down, except in the windows where a display of hats or of evening dresses made, in the flare of the electric light, a continual advertisement. Mary Burns held out her hand to take from the messenger the pile of envelopes containing the week's salary that she, as head of her department, distributed to the girls under her charge. She did it briskly, smiling back in good fellowship at the smiles that greeted her. Then she slowly took her own envelope and tore it open. She had never done this, since the night when her salary had been raised, without feeling that that good luck might be repeated. They needed the money twice as much now since Jennie had stopped work.

Only the usual bills and the half dollar dropped out, but with them came a brief note. She read it and reread it until the lines grew dim upon the page. The superintendent regretted to state that the services of Miss Mary Burns as saleslady were no longer required at Smith's. Mary glanced up at the clock. The superintendent had

already gone, and she could not demand an explanation to-night. She looked at the girls about her, wondering if any one had noticed her agitation. The Jewess was walking away, in her huge hat with brilliant blue feathers. The pale girl who liked whipped cream was buttoning her worn black coat with its frayed buttonholes, and was looking toward the door. Only the little cash-girl, whose affection for Mary had undergone so many fluctuations, had seen the colour recede from her cheeks. She said nothing, did nothing, but she hung round Mary's heels, like a faithful dog, as the girl put the note quietly into her pocket and walked away. Inheritance and training had taught Mary Burns not to make a fuss about things. She threaded her way among the people standing in the street to catch whiffs of the sweet, cool April air, and, climbing the stairs, she put some oatmeal to soak for Sunday's dinner.

Early on Monday morning she presented herself at the office of the superintendent at Smith's. He was very polite. He really did not know the reason for the dismissal. There were peculiar circumstances attending it. Mr. Smith had directed it, and had vouchsafed no explanation. Could he give a recommendation? He hesitated and coughed. That would depend on Mr. Smith. Then he turned his eyes away. It was unpleasant to look at the face that was working like the face of a hurt child.

Anger flamed up in the heart of Mary Burns. It was some plot. Had they found some one who could do her work better? She had been given no reason for this dismissal. Had she not served Smith's faithfully ever since she had entered, nine years ago, as a little cash-girl? She turned from the superintendent's office and confronted Mr. Smith. Why had they done this thing? she demanded, her voice thrilling with her tragic consciousness that those few dollars of her earning week by week were all that lay between Jennie and starvation. Mr. Smith looked at her with admiration. One lock of her yellow hair had floated out

from under her black sailor hat. The plain black gown seemed to deepen her colouring. He apologized profusely. It was a delicate situation, he suggested. Miss Burns would probably prefer not to know. His voice was rich with sympathy. He stood before her, courteous, deferential, an imitation gentleman from the tip of his pointed French beard to the ends of his pointed-toed boots.

"I want to know it, all of it," panted Mary Burns. Her blue eyes looked fearlessly at him.

"If I must speak, I must," he answered. "Come this way."

He led the girl to a retired corner in the upholstery department, then stood, with one hand resting on a counter, his arm slightly bent. It is a favourite attitude in English fashion books.

"The fact is," he remarked, looking cynically at the girl from his half-closed eyes, "that Mrs. Smith requested it. I must be perfectly frank with you. Mrs. Smith long ago saw you in the shop, and noticed some slight service that I was able to perform."

He went on, sorry for the girl, but also enjoying the effect of his words. One had to make allowances for Mrs. Smith. Peace at home was necessary. She had been feeding her suspicions all winter on untrustworthy evidence from her own eyes and from other people, and had become convinced that he was unduly interested in Miss Burns. This public step he was compelled to take. If by any assistance he could atone for this misfortune until Miss Burns found further employment, he should be only too glad.

His auditor had gone. Turning abruptly, she hurried downstairs, not stopping for the elevator. Her fellow-clerks looked after her in bewilderment as she went out of doors. One of them called to her, but in vain. Upstairs, in the upholstery department, Mr. Smith gracefully kicked an ottoman into place, lifted two silk pillows, embroidered with huge "W's," intended to win the hearts of the college students, and smoothed a silk portière. He was smiling.

Mrs. Smith's outbreak had been a surprise to him, but if he had been planning things himself, he reflected, he could not have done so well. Mrs. Smith was really playing the part of unsuspecting providence in forwarding his designs.

Out on the street Mary Burns looked this way and then that, along Dowden Avenue. She would go to the Dennis Agency. She wanted no recommendation from Smith's! A feeling of physical repulsion seemed crawling over her skin. The insult she had received degraded her. Spite of the sin she had been compelled to witness, and wakening to it had come early, as it always comes to the poor, she was clean-hearted as a little child. Her swift walking down a long side street to the dilapidated square that she was seeking quieted her. There was an air of failure about the place. Bricks were loosened or wanting in the walls of the houses, and the fence round the tiny plot of dragged grass was broken in two places. The old trees were rotting away limb by limb. As she passed, a dead twig fell on her cheek, and grazed the skin. She climbed the dirty steps of the house that she was seeking and entered a dark room, where a man with unkempt hair and unclean fingers sat at an old oak desk. She told briefly her name, age, residence, and her desire in regard to finding work. The man's solemn eyes looked at her inquiringly. In his worn, black, shiny clothes, with ragged gray hair falling about his ears, he looked like an unholy prophet who had insight only into the wrong things to come.

"Why had she left her last place," he asked.

The girl's face grew red.

"I was dismissed," she answered. "I can't tell you why."

He shook his head. The suspicion in his look stained the girl's soul. There was silence, except when a ragged canary bird chirped mournfully in its dingy cage.

"Can you bring recommendations?" asked Mr. Dennis. She shook her head.

He leaned back in his chair and spoke deliberately. Rules were more strict than they had been, and she could not get any place without certificate of health, recommendation from her last employer, and experience. The first and last requirements she could apparently meet. The second, in regard to character and skill in work, was the question. Should he go to Smith's and investigate?

"I do not like to think of you alone without work, in this city," he said.

His voice had a grave and non-committal tone that could change into approbation or reproof as circumstances dictated. He was genuinely sorry for this girl. It had probably been her first fault. She shrank from the implied suspicion as if she had been stung.

"No, don't go," she said. "It wouldn't do any good. I won't register. I can't afford a dollar for nothing."

The ragged canary burst into a triumphant song as Mary opened the door, letting in a flood of light. She walked slowly across the square, counting her steps in order to have something to occupy her mind. From the grimy window of the Dennis Agency the proprietor watched her with mournful eyes, full of the knowledge of evil. It would be that way everywhere, Mary reflected, counting four hundred and one for her footsteps. Her hands burned, and her throat was parched. She was clear-sighted, and she saw the end from the beginning. This experience would be repeated in whatever agency she approached.

The rest of the morning was spent in application at dry-goods establishments. She knew just how to proceed. Entering, she asked for the superintendent. To him she presented her application. In every place where the existence of a vacancy justified investigation of the applicant's fitness, the experience of the Dennis Agency was repeated. From each conversation the girl retired with a feeling that a new stone had been flung at her. She went from Gordon's aristocratic house in South Winthrop to Schlesinger's plebeian place across the river. At Gordon's the superinten-

dent admitted that a saleswoman was needed. Where had she worked? he asked.

"At Smith's," answered the girl.

He broke off the interview at once. It was an entirely different class of work in this house, he said. Experience there could hardly have fitted her for a position at Gordon's.

Mary turned away. Her shoe-lacing was untied, but she was too tired to fasten it. It was luncheon time. She should never want anything to eat again, she thought, but she was very, very tired, and would like to rest. If she should go home Jennie would know what had happened. That must not come at any cost, for Jennie must be kept from going to work again. It was not far from Gordon's to the common. Mary dragged herself thither and sat down on one of the wooden benches near a path. A sleepy tramp occupied the next one. Overhead, the sky was blue, and the twigs of the trees against the colour were already tinted with a hope of spring. The ground was moist about her, and the air, spite of the sunshine, touched her sharply with a sense of chill. It was very quiet, though birds were twittering in the trees. Many people passed: children, going home from school; black-robed students, whistling as they walked; working-men in blouses, with pails in their hands; a gray-haired professor of philosophy, thinking about the Absolute. Some of them stared at the girl who was sitting out in the cold, with pinched blue lips and red nose. None of them knew — how could they? how close was the bordering of suffering and sorrow on their happy and sheltered lives.

She was not wasting her time as she sat there, sometimes closing her eyes to rest them, sometimes staring absent-mindedly at passing figures. Every fibre in her body was energetic, practical. She was thinking over the past winter, thinking over the days to come. Ahead lay a long, desolate stretch of roadway, with no shadow where the two tired pilgrim sisters could rest. Jennie had stopped working in December. Mary had insisted upon that. Since

that time they had lived entirely upon her wages, three dollars and a half a week. They had eaten oatmeal and potatoes; once a week, beef. Jennie had mended their clothes with skill that was little short of a miracle, and Mary's black dress and Mary's stockings had done long service. She had done the washings on Sundays, and the ironing had been left undone. That was too hard work for Jennie. At first the older sister had tried sewing, but it brought back, even more quickly than did the work at Schlesinger's, the old, sharp pain in her back. Mary had taken it all away from her, forbidding her to get more, and the older woman had submitted. It was she now who was the obedient child.

That was the past. What next? Mary asked herself sharply, as she rose to continue her search. There was absolutely no reserve-fund except the ten dollars in the bank. There were no relatives to whom they could appeal. There were no friends. She dragged herself from shop to shop all the afternoon. Everywhere she met the same look of knowing amusement when she confessed that she had been dismissed without recommendation. She saw that she was in a fatal network, and she asked herself what the end of the drawing of it together would be. Her eyes took the look of a wild animal trying to escape from a pen. Her hair was disordered, and little locks fell about her face. A seam in her old worn gloves ripped the entire length of one finger, and she stepped on the facing of her dress, moving awkwardly because her step was weak. There was no way to fasten it except by taking a pin from her collar. As she did this, her dress gaped a little, untidily, in the neck. She had a disordered look when she went home at six o'clock, exhausted by long waiting, and her face was gray.

"What's the matter?" asked Jennie, with sharp anxiety, when her eyes rested on the girl.

"Nothing's the matter of me," said Mary, smiling. "Is anything the matter of you? My facing's torn."

"Give it here," said Jennie. She made Mary sit down

in a chair beside her. Turning up the skirt, she sewed the torn muslin with black thread. She noticed that her sister's hands were shaking.

"You look as if you had seen a ghost," she ventured to say, gazing wistfully at the younger girl.

"I haven't seen any ghost except you," answered Mary. "You are ghost enough for me. Here, sit down again. Didn't I tell you to leave my kitchen alone?"

She pulled her sister down into her chair again, and took forcibly from her the fork with which she was turning potatoes in a little black spider, over the oil-stove. Jennie watched the girl as she took off her hat and came back to bend over the fire.

"Did you have a good day?" she asked.

"It seemed kind of long," said Mary Burns, turning a bit of potato.

At supper she managed to talk almost as much as usual. They were often rather silent when they were together. Jennie noticed with uneasiness that the girl evaded one of her questions. She had asked how many sales Mary had made that day, and Mary pretended not to hear. After supper, she leaned back in her chair as if exhausted, then sprang to her feet and worked with feverish energy, washing the tea-cups and scrubbing the spider. She begged Jennie to go to bed, promising to come as soon as she had mended her glove.

Jennie slipped out of her limp shirt waist and alpaca skirt, and into her coarse white nightgown. Then she turned down the patchwork quilt and knelt to say her prayers as she had done when she was a little child. Anxiety about Mary distracted her thoughts. She could not keep her eyes shut, and she found herself looking between her fingers toward the girl. It was long before she fell asleep. Mary had pinned a newspaper to a stick that they had nailed to the foot of the bed, and Jennie's eyes were shaded. She tried to hum a tune as she slowly mended the finger of her glove, and she rocked nervously in her

little splint-bottomed rocker. Jennie watched her yellow head swinging to and fro, and the rhythm in the motion gradually soothed her to sleep.

When Mary saw that the eyelids were closed over the sunken eyes, a great sigh of relief shook her. She blew out the candle. Then she stretched herself out on the rug that lay along the side of the bed — it was a bit of rag carpet saved from the furnishings of the yellow farmhouse — and sobbed, with her face to the floor. She did not dare cry aloud for fear of waking her sister. It was good to be able at last to cry! Solitude was luxury she had rarely possessed for a minute of her life. Her arms were stretched out at her sides; the floor rested them so! The rag carpet dried the tears on her cheeks.

Through the soft days of April, while in South Winthrop the thinkers were puzzling out their problems, and Annice Gordon was learning to listen for Henry Worthington's footfall upon the threshold, the two sisters crawled wearily along their hard pathway. Mary was systematically deceiving her sister, and that sister was vaguely uneasy with foreboding of coming wrong. The younger girl went away at the usual hour every morning, came back after six at night. But she was taciturn, and she disliked being questioned about the events of the day. She was growing thin, and there were dark circles under her eyes. Jennie noticed that her sister's shoes were wearing out rapidly, and she had to have a new braid on her gown long before the usual time. Mary saw the trouble day by day in her sister's eyes as they rested on her dusty skirts.

"You ain't so careful as you used to be about your looks," said Jennie one morning, as Mary put her hat on a little bit awry. "Your hair don't look so pretty as it used. I want you to look nice," she added timidly.

"I never was as vain as some folks," said Mary, with a laugh.

From the nuns' garden floated up the sound of chimes.

"Hurry, you're late!" cried the older sister. "You'll lose your place, or you'll have to pay a fine!"

The girl ran with apparent haste down the stairs. Jennie rocked to and fro in the splint rocker, and sewed on a gingham dress that she was making for her sister. She, too, practised her deceptions. While Mary tramped the city, hungry, tired, desperate, the older woman sat and sewed, regardless of her aching back. When Mary came home at night, Jennie hid the fruits of her disobedience in the farthest corner under the bed.

"She ain't the same girl that she was," said Jennie this morning, and she dried her eyes on the blue gingham.

It never occurred to Mary Burns that it would be wiser to consult her older sister in solving this new problem. To her one determination that Jennie should not know, for fear that she would go back to work, Mary clung with unconquerable Scotch tenacity. A great fear dogged the girl's footsteps. Jennie was ill. She might die if nothing were done for her. The secret of the dismissal from Smith's would help kill her, and she must not know. Toiling up and down staircases, dragging herself along the streets, knocking at kitchen doors and asking if there were a place vacant for a maid, the girl saw constantly before her eyes visions of the early days. Mary, the rebellious child, barefooted, sunbonneted, had run away from school; Jennie had begged her off when punishment was threatened. Jennie had taught her to read, had made her gingham dresses and aprons, had brought her to the city and had slaved to save money for a year's schooling before the little sister entered the ranks of the wage-earners. She had taken care of the girl through scarlet fever, sitting up at night and working all day. She had won great devotion, and Scotch devotion is a dangerous thing to rouse.

Mary exhausted her resources slowly. The possibility of going back to their birthplace to ask for work in a farmhouse never occurred to her. Nobody had had servants in that land where all were alike poor, and the girl did not

know that domestic service on a farm was possible. She had applied at every dry-goods establishment in Winthrop. She had gone to three agencies, registering only in one, because of inability to afford fees. Always, in shop, agency, at private door, the story of her leaving her last place of employment condemned her. She had drawn the ten dollars from the bank without her sister's knowledge. At the end of the first week she brought Jennie three and one-half dollars of it, as she always had brought her weekly wages. At the end of the second she brought three and a half more. At the end of the third she gave her two dollars with a forced little laugh.

"You can't have any more this time," she said. "It's a secret."

One night, as Mary was coming home at the usual hour, she met her former employer as she was turning into Salutation Street. He lifted his hat, hesitated a minute with great delicacy, then ventured to hope that Miss Burns was succeeding in her work. He had no doubt she had obtained something to do. She looked at him and passed on. He noticed with satisfaction that her shoes were broken and worn. The pathos of her clothing, her air of defeat, did not escape him.

"You really must not blame me if things are going wrong," he said quickly. "I was helpless in the matter, and you refused my assistance. If I can help you now —"

He saw the indignant colour in the girl's face. The blue eyes had for a minute all their old brilliancy. He could not feel that sensation of relief that forced its way into her unwilling heart at the sound of the sympathetic voice, but he went down the street in a mood of self-congratulation, reflecting that you can always get what you want if you wait long enough.

Mary kept up her wandering search for employment long after she was convinced of its futility. Some days she went without luncheon, coming perilously near to telling lies to her sister when she was questioned as to what

she had eaten that day. Sometimes she carried with her from home a bit of bread and butter or an apple. She squandered no money for car-fares, and her long walks exhausted her. As her hope of getting work faded, her one endeavour was to find a way of passing the time, so that Jennie should not discover their dilemma. She walked the streets slowly, gazing into shop windows. She sat as long as she dared on seats in the park. Often she wandered out to the marshes. Their beauty was a secret from her, but their silence and sweep, and the absence of staring eyes, comforted her. Once she spent the entire morning on the ground by a haystack. The air was sweet with songs of birds, and all about her, ripple after ripple, was coming in the tide of summer colour, from palest foam-like shades to deepest green. In these long hours of solitude her fancies troubled her, and she was no longer sure of what she had done or was going to do. The insinuations that had met her were slowly poisoning her mind. All the people she addressed, in hope of finding work, suspected her of wrong-doing. Even Jennie's face wore a look of great misgiving. Was she guilty of the sins they attributed to her? Mary sometimes asked herself. Her mind lost its old, steady balance, and a vacant look crept into her eyes.

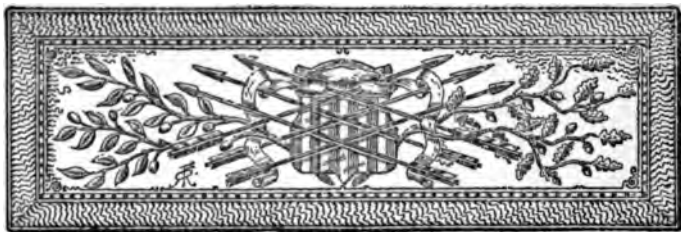
More than anything else she dreaded the moments of waking in the early morning hours. She lost her old habit of sleep. The noise of drays and trucks in the street, the wailing of cats, kept her awake at night. Falling into a light doze, she would waken with a great start, when the first faint light was coming in at their window. In these moments of hush, before life stirred in the city, the utter desolation of it all swept over her. She thought of herself, and of the motherlessness of the years to come, when Jennie had died for lack of proper care. She thought of Jennie, with fierce, vindictive longing to help, and bitter rebellion against the facts of their lives — all that mingling of helplessness and omnipotence which is love. She did

not cry at those moments; she had not strength for that. She only stretched herself out, tense in every muscle, and stared at the wall, Jennie asleep by her side.

One night as she turned into Salutation Street on the way home, the postman met her. He held out a note to her, a small, square envelope, directed in an upright hand.

"Ain't you Miss Mary Burns?" he asked.

She opened it joyously, standing in the doorway of the tenement-house where she lived. It consisted of a few brief lines from Mr. Smith, renewing his offer of assistance. He was always ready to give it, he said, whenever she should need it.



CHAPTER XVII



HENRY dropped Pantaleoni and picked up Marshall, trying hard for ten minutes to read. Both seemed singularly uninspired. That old electric touch between his mind and the author's was wanting, and he wondered how either book could ever have thrilled him so.

Then he turned to the table and lifted a pile of his manuscript. It was loathsome to the touch. Books and papers he piled up in a little heap, and then he paced the floor of his room, his hands in his pockets. Those things were all in the way! Tangible objects and subjects for thought seemed alike unnecessary and even intrusive. After all, there was an amazing simplicity about one's needs in life, if one only thought of it.

He stopped by his mother's picture, an old-fashioned daguerreotype whose elusive beauty brought out the fine outlines and deep brown eyes of that face he had never known. Henry took the picture to the window and turned it about until the light fell properly upon it.

"I think they look a great deal alike," he said to himself. "The hair is parted in the same way."

He studied the portrait with an attentive scowl. These eyes had none of the mirthfulness that was in Miss Gordon's at times. Hers had such a range of expression, from

pure mischief, to some dumb, tragic sense of things. Henry stood a long time by the window, and Eleanor Worthington's face looked into her son's across the silent years with a look that he needed now, of entire sympathy and comprehension. The young man's keen gray eyes grew dreamy as he gazed out of the window at the ragged buttonwood trees and the tall, gaunt poplar. They were so different, all these familiar things: the trees and the garden outside, the mahogany bureau and bead-fringed pin-cushion inside. It had been very sudden, but the world was changed forever. The scent of earth through which young grass was growing floated up to him. He knelt by the window and put his head upon his arms. The April sun was warm upon his hair.

He had seen her five times since that first meeting. Every one of those sacred minutes, every flitting expression on the girl's face throbbed now in his veins. Curiously enough, he could not realize her new environment. Memory could form only one picture of her: a slender figure in an ugly calico waist, with smooth, meek hair and eyes that were not meek. He resented the elegance of Mrs. Appleton's parlour, and the unreal prettiness of these streets in South Winthrop where, by happy chance, he had seen Annice twice. Her profile stayed with its first background of grotesque toys, and faces lined with work and care.

Suddenly there came to him like a sting, as he knelt by the window in the fragrant sunshine, the thought of his winter's work in class-room and in factory-office. It was all so far away! Why should he remember Mr. Gordon and his objectionable money in a world where pulses beat like this? What did he care about it anyway? He wanted all the world to fade out of his way. He wanted silence in a great wide space of grass and flowers, silence, and Annice Gordon's face. Why had anybody else been created? Past and future and this wide earth of men and things seemed annihilated, burned into nothingness in one moment of white, vital heat.

The bell rang for luncheon. Henry rose reluctantly and smoothed his hair. His steps were unwilling as he went downstairs. Everything in the house, the books in the library, his mother's desk, the carved oaken staircase wore that look of being new. Every touch of those familiar things that he had known as a child made him conscious of the wide gulf that separated those days from these.

Alfred Worthington, as he cut the steak, scrutinized his son's face anxiously. It was known to him that Henry, notoriously unsociable as he was, had in two weeks called three times at Mr. Penrose's where this strange girl was staying, and that on one of these occasions he had remained the entire evening. The professor noted the remoteness in his son's eyes. He sighed. His heart this winter had been an inn where anxiety after anxiety had come to lodge and stay. For the first time he had not Henry's confidence. For the first time he tried to win it.

"That Miss Gordon is a very pretty girl," he remarked incidentally, watching his son closely. He saw with satisfaction that the boy's appetite had not failed.

"Is she?" asked Henry.

"Haven't you noticed?" demanded the father, laying down his fork and gazing in undisguised astonishment at the boy. Diplomacy was not the professor's strong point.

"I never notice girls," said Henry, loftily.

It was true, in view of the plural. Just now his fingers were busy remembering the touch of Annice Gordon's fingers as she had shaken hands with him the last time.

"Fritters?" asked the maid at his elbow.

"No, thank you," said Henry, crossly. He begged his father to excuse him and rose to go.

"Is anything the matter?" asked Alfred Worthington, in anxiety.

Henry shook his head.

"Only busy."

"By the way," said the professor, speaking very gently,

"have you given up that nonsense about Gordon? You told me some time ago that you were going to give your students a kind of lecture about dishonest money in relation to universities."

Thought travelled painfully back in Henry's mind to that old resolution. The idea had an unfamiliar and unattractive sound. Money seemed just then the last thing in the world of any consequence.

"It hasn't anything to do with Gordon," said Henry.

"What!" said the professor, rising.

"I mean," the young man explained, "that I had planned to discuss the general question of the duty of a trained thinker toward practical social problems. I mean, too, to touch the responsibility of institutions in regard to the money they accept. It was Gordon that started me on that last subject, but the thing has broadened out into an entirely impersonal problem. Why should any one connect my remarks with the gift of last October?"

The professor's face was a mixture of pleasure and of pain.

"You might have spared me a great deal of anxiety if you had explained sooner," he remarked.

"It never occurred to me that you wouldn't understand," said Henry.

Alfred Worthington came round the table and put his hand on his son's shoulder.

"Don't do it, Henry," he begged. "I'm afraid that you will make a blunder that cannot be unmade. Even if you do not connect the matter with Gordon's name, other people will. Has it ever occurred to you —" the professor was a brave man, but his own audacity frightened him — "that Miss Gordon is Mr. Gordon's daughter?"

"I fail to see what that has to do with the question," answered Henry. The dreams had faded from his eyes, and the old, clear light was coming back.

"You would hardly care to insult her father," said the professor, turning away.

"But what I am going to do hasn't anything to do with her father," insisted Henry. "Don't you know that Mr. Gordon's ownership of Smith's is a secret? Why should anybody connect my criticism of ill-gotten gains with him?"

"To be sure," said the father, relieved. They were probably the only two people in South Winthrop who did not know that the story of Mr. Gordon's connection with Smith's was common property. Still Alfred Worthington was not satisfied.

"I can't get rid of my old dislike in having you meddle with these things," he said, smiling wistfully.

"But don't you see that I've got to do it? I can't go back on myself that way!" cried Henry. "Don't look so troubled. I'd give up my life for you."

The anxiety of the whole winter gathered into one minute of bitterness for the professor.

"You would do anything in general," he said, "anything except the one small thing I ask."

The mood was contagious.

"Was your teaching to me when I was a child in regard to the sacredness of conviction a matter of pure theory?" asked Henry. "You seem to find its practical working very hard."

They looked at each other for a minute with estranged eyes. Then they both apologized.

Henry toiled until two o'clock that night, elaborating heads four and five of his lecture. To fail now would be barest cowardice. His brain worked hard to fight down the intoxication of his pulses. He had to shut the window to keep out the cool night air and the star-lit shadows of the world outside. By some strange irony, the thought of Annice inspired him and hindered him at every line. She made him eager to do and dare, and incapable of thinking of anything except her. She was the mainspring of action; she was also paralysis. Her face intruded itself between subject and verb.

It was a fair May afternoon when he walked down Wiclif Street to give that crucial lecture. All the past year came back to him through the bright air. He smiled in memory of the agony at examination-time, not with less sympathy, but with stronger confidence in himself. There was a little quiver of pleasure in the thought of what he was about to do. He was going to defy collective prejudice, and his lip curled in scorn at his father's fear of civic disgrace. Swift swaying emotion brought him then a moment of sorrow for the loss of his father's approval, that sanction which had been the aim of his lifelong endeavour, and he walked more slowly, the shadow of young leaves falling across his face. Oh, it was hard, with the spring in his veins, to hold to one strict purpose, and keep always in sight the goal on the long, straight, narrow road ahead! It was always discipline, narrowness, denial of some kind. His blood cried out for music and dancing and the play of life. Love came back with tenfold power after every effort to shut it away.

He was unlocking the door of his lecture-room, and crowds of students were rushing up and down the stairs. The moment reminded him irresistibly of his first day here. There were no terrors for him in the class-room now, and away from it he longed to return, like a young war-horse panting for battle. He was looking, with a sense of newness in it all, at the rows of heads in his lecture-room, and his heart beat high in exultation. They listened to him, those students. They cared for what he said. His mind touched theirs and both were quickened. And to-day was his own. All winter he had dealt with other men's ideas. He had expounded Mill and Marshall and Ricardo. Resolutely he had ruled out all personal conviction, trying to teach with a scientist's impartiality the abstract theories with which he dealt. To-day the problem was human, personal, and he was to speak words of his own. He opened his note-book and began.

Here a footstep on the threshold brought the blood throb-

bing to his temples. He did not look up, but he knew that his father had entered, and had taken a seat in the back of the room. His lips paled a little, then his voice steadied itself with deeper energy. The moment's curiosity on the part of the class was forgotten in listening to the young professor.

It had occurred to him, he said, while they had been examining the doctrines of the great German and English economists, that it would be well to stop and consider the relation of the economist to the practical workings of the world about him. The economist was a man of science. He was forced to observe phenomena and report. He did not make, he only discovered, the economic laws that ruled his world.

This was a commonplace. It was obvious, so obvious that it was untrue. Certainly, the economist was a man of science, not a moralist. But for all that, to his trained insight was attached a certain moral responsibility. If the affairs of the industrial world were wholly beyond the reach of human control, as was the province of the chemist — here the boy glanced for the first time at his father, and from this time talked to his father's corner — he would be as free as the chemist to take the position of mere watcher, mere reporter. But the economist's world was ruled in a different way: half natural law, half human will — the result, a complex problem, subtle, many-sided. To a certain extent legislation could and did control the laws of trade. The history of protection of industry in any country would show that. For human suffering, then, legislation was in a certain way responsible. To what extent, was a question, important, perhaps the most important in the world, for every citizen of any country.

"Stop and think," he said, "you whose votes and whose opinions are to help rule your country. Are there not business methods, justified by the letter of the law, condoned by a rich and comfortable Christianity, but worthy to be condemned by any law except that of wild beasts?"

All the time, Henry was conscious of the direct gaze of his father's eyes. He knew that they would be pained by what he was going to say, but, strangely enough, that did not trouble him. They seemed to be urging him on. He looked out of the window where the old oak tree that he used to climb stood outlined against the blue sky. His father's voice came back to him, as, standing beneath the tree, he had urged the child on.

"Go on, hold tight!" he had called. "Don't give up, my son."

With the inspiration of that voice in his ears he went on.

Granting the existence of such methods, he said, was not the economist, who was able by dint of study to form more impartial judgments than were possible for business men in the thick of the fight, was not the economist bound to suggest legislative remedies for existing evils? Was it not his duty to fight for his principles in caucus and in political meeting, and to work his ideals into the ballot-box? Had he any right to stand aloof from practical politics, as the scholar was too prone to do, keeping his own hands clean, and sneering in moral superiority at the sins he made no effort to stop?

For illustration of this general principle he reported certain facts that he had discovered in the investigations of the winter. He described the methods of work of great monopolies and trusts, the corruption that attended their winning power in our senate, the suffering that often followed in their wake from sudden and arbitrary rise in prices. He sketched in detail the workings of the huge and unscrupulous department-shop. He touched briefly on the horrors that attended the ready-made clothing business. All of these transactions, he said, came within the letter of the law of business honesty, yet judged by any higher code they were criminal. Legislation had already interfered with some industrial abuses. In factories, for instance, the number of hours of work had been settled by

law. More could be done. It remained for the intelligent citizen to make it impossible for men to barter in human misery.

Henry dropped his notes and came forward to the edge of the platform. His eyes glowed under their dark eyebrows, and his hands quivered. There was utter silence in the room for a minute, and all eyes were fixed upon him as if they could not turn away. The face of the lame boy, Henry's favourite among them all, was ablaze with interest. Allan Hayes's cheeks were stinging with remembrance of the late report concerning his Uncle Gordon's ownership of Smith's in North Winthrop. Every face was full of eager desire to hear more.

There was another aspect to the question, the young professor was saying. Certain ways of getting money prove questionable when examined in the light of any finer moral code. Money gained by methods like these is continually dropping into the coffers of institutions that stand for the higher intellectual and religious life of the country. There might be different ways of looking at this, but to him it seemed as if, in accepting money like this, an institution condoned the methods by which it was gained, and created a demand for that kind of profit. A curious paradox was the result. For theological institutions, which stood as bulwarks of Christian faith, to draw their support from money obtained dishonestly and often at the cost of human life, meant winning the spiritual enlightenment of the race at too great a cost.

"We, who are sons of Winthrop, cannot afford this," said Henry, with a little trembling in his voice. "Think what our university has stood for in the past. Think what it must stand for in the future. Its roots go down into the very heart of our nation's life. New thought about these matters must start somewhere. What place could be better than in our colleges, which hold so sacred a position in American life? I know no better way of beginning than by stopping to examine the gifts made to places

like this. Undergraduate condemnation might rouse the consciences of the trustees, so that money stained by the suffering of women and little children should be sternly refused, and outside people should be roused to think why decisions like these are made."

His knees had stopped trembling, and his wrists felt firmer. A light had come into his eyes, and his voice, that fine, strong, boyish voice that would some day know even greater power and greater tenderness than it was capable of now, trembled and grew strong again as he went on talking. It was eloquent with the feeling that vibrated there, for the young scholar had awakened to a vital sense of the human problems with which he was dealing. He had started out in the interest of an abstract question. Since that half hour in Mrs. Appleton's drawing-room there had been no abstract questions for him in the world. He had touched the sorrow of all humanity, and was on the track of the joy. The face that glowed in the afternoon light was not the face of a dreamer, but of a thinker, an idealist, a man of will and purpose and clear sight.

To the professor, the sight and sound of all this was like the clutching of a hand at his throat. That was his child, only yesterday, it seemed, wearing his first pair of trousers. That boy was swaying men, leading, convincing them! Mingled pride and shame and admiration and anger warred in the professor's soul. Queer little thrills of delight coursed down his backbone. Little shudders of disgust made his shoulders quiver. He almost opened his mouth to utter a protest, then he bent his head to listen, half converted by his son. When the lecturer bowed, dismissing his class, Professor Worthington passed out, not waiting for Henry. He was too deeply moved to speak just then.

Henry rose and shut the door, then came back and bowed his head upon his arms. He forgot his father, and that father, walking the streets alone, knew it. He forgot his lecture. He wanted to see, if only for a minute, and far

off, the face of Annice Gordon. He had not condemned her father, though he had condemned her father's ethics, and his conscience was clear. Yet a foreboding of disaster clouded his eyes, and he threw back his head, his nostrils white and strained. Why had he done it? He, with his way yet to win, had deliberately rolled a stumbling-block into his own path. Name, fame, his chances of success, he had risked them all in suggesting a criticism of the trustees. He wished the idea had never occurred to him, and he put his head down upon the desk again. He was very tired.

Professor Worthington walked rapidly through the city, his mind in a tumult. As he had foreseen, Henry's remarks had amounted to a public condemnation of Gordon, though no reference had been made to him. A sense of the bad taste in this stung Alfred Worthington, and yet every nerve in his body thrilled with pride in his son. He looked about him. He was passing the old state-house, and the shadow of its historic oak was on his face. This was his city, his. Passionate pride in her spires, her ivy-covered buildings, the very stones in the streets, possessed him. It meant, in its quiet beauty, and the faith for which it stood, a larger self, a social self incarnate. Truly the streets of Winthrop had been the highways bordering upon the edges of an unseen kingdom that was waiting — and here his son had disgraced him.

He was in the outskirts of the city now, walking rapidly, with the young May wind in his face. Under his feet the sod was soft. Swift motion could not take him beyond the torment of feeling his own shadow fall between the boy and his love for the boy. In his annoyance over the practical outcome of this thing he was haunted by those larger moments of pure, boundless love, that gave all and asked nothing. Near a farmhouse he paused to look back, and he leaned for a minute against a broken rail fence. There lay his city, beautiful with all her spires, beyond the meadows of misty green. The old loneliness that he had

known before the boy came, the gap which neither his friendship with his wife nor his love for his friend had satisfied, was strong upon him now. Henry, only Henry, had filled the earth and air and sky.

A sound of loud chirping roused him. In the fence at his feet a newly hatched chicken was struggling, its foot caught between a rail and a stone. Very carefully the professor lifted the rail, and took the little thing up in his hand. One leg hung limp and lame. Alfred Worthington's other hand closed over it, and the tiny creature nestled close to his fingers with soft sounds of content. The touch of its down, its appeal for protection, struck home to the father's heart, and his lips quivered in recollecting that other new-born creature that had once demanded his protection, and would never need it any more.



CHAPTER XVIII



ENRY was slowly pacing the garden paths, his hands clasped behind him. That odour from the box borders was a breath from the days of his boyhood. It made him one with all the new springing things about him. This was the day after his lecture, and he was allowing himself a moment of rest after that hard strain. He had done his duty. He had sternly roused his soul from the lethargy of happiness into which it had been sinking. Now it was his right to dream again, and dreams are sweet. He was wondering how Annice Gordon would look here in this garden, standing by the little silver poplar, which was slender and tall like herself. Over twig and stem showed the faintest possible ripple of pale green against the white. Someway it looked like Annice.

A light came into the young man's face. Why had he not thought of that before? Perhaps Miss Gordon was in the library at this minute. She was often there with Mrs. Appleton. For three days he had not seen her, and he was ashamed to call again so soon. Besides, he had some important bibliographical work to be done immediately. In five minutes he was striding impatiently along the sidewalk, wondering why he was so late. The only person on whom his eyes lighted as he entered the library was Professor Pen-

rose. Henry greeted him with courtesy emphasized by his disappointment, then turned to the card-catalogue and took notes on a piece of paper. Lifting his eyes, he saw, in a far corner, under a Gothic arch, Annice sitting with the light falling on her hair, her face shining out with distinctness from a dusty background of old books. Henry drew a great sigh of relief and went on with his work.

When he looked up again he saw that Mrs. Appleton, too, was working in an alcove near by, with a great pile of books about her. Professor Penrose was talking to Annice. The girl was listening intently, and her expression recorded her change of thought. Henry fretted inwardly. That gift of sympathy with which she was endowed was dangerous, after all, he said to himself. There was a chameleon quality about her that turned her, for the time being, into something strangely akin to the person with whom she was talking. He had seen her before when, for the moment, she seemed only another version of Penrose. It was too much to bear! With unutterable relief he heard the professor coming back to his former position.

Henry studied his catalogue in wrath. Miss Gordon did not know that he was there, he said to himself. She would not lift her eyes. He could detect her presence without the use of eye or ear. Her very nearness set every fibre in his body quivering. But she was remote, abstracted, deaf, dumb. She did not care. It had all been a mistake! He reflected with bitterness that she would not look at him except when he was talking. It was only an intellectual interest that had lighted her eyes. Henry, for the moment, was distinctly jealous of his own ideas. Utterly indifferent to him, apparently, when he was silent, she wakened eagerly if he made some remark about social right and wrong, and that subtle beauty came back to her face. He liked to stimulate her, to rouse her. He could play on her as a man plays on a stringed instrument, and colour flashed for him in rhythmic beats across her face, for thought seemed half physical with her. Her beauty had become a task for

him. To evoke that hidden charm, pursue it while it fled, brought into his intercourse with her the fascination of pursuit. He knew, in a way, that his remarks were keen and penetrating, but he was not content with appreciation. With most people he was willing to be a voice, a mere abstraction. He was conscious of an irritated desire to make Miss Gordon know that he was human. He would rouse her now from her reverie. Scattering his notes upon a convenient table, he hastily crossed to her corner of the room.

"May I interrupt?" he asked, standing humbly before her. "I only wanted to see whether it is Mill or Marshall you are reading."

Professor Penrose looked on, pitying and understanding. He was a philosopher, and he could not fail to comprehend Henry's growing fondness for tea, and his abnormal fastidiousness about his clothes. Ought he to warn the boy of the girl's mental malady? The professor's mind was clouded with a doubt. Meanwhile, it was his duty to shield her, in case any fresh outbreak should come. Whenever it was possible, he was near. He could not tell Juliette. How much or how little she knew regarding the sojourn at Smith's he dared not conjecture. The mere fact was in her possession; the right explanation, he was sure, was not. Juliette's mind, he confessed to himself, was lacking in a certain delicacy, and she probably attributed to longing for adventure this vagary of an unsettled mind. The entire responsibility, therefore, was his.

Mrs. Appleton, too, looked at the picture under the Gothic arch, and her face beamed with satisfaction. She had never done a better bit of work than that in her life, she said, ruthlessly shutting out even the Creator from a share in the credit. Henry and his father ought to marry money—she could not think of them apart, even here. They had gone shabby long enough, and the Worthingtons were not made for shabbiness. Mrs. Appleton caught the look with which Annice greeted the young man, and she went back to her notes in disapproval.

"Annice is too transparent to make him as miserable as he ought to be," she reflected. "I wish the girl could flirt! He ought to be humbled in the dust for his superciliousness."

Annice was reading an exquisitely printed copy of *Aucassin and Nicolette*. She had managed to greet Henry with a glance of surprise, though he had not made a movement since entering the room of which she had not been keenly aware. Now the two brown heads were bending together over the old romance. The librarian groaned. Two pairs of hands at once touching that precious vellum! He had given it to the girl reluctantly. Now he leaned his worn face with its shadow of gray hair over his register again. That books should be used at all was a sore trial to him. He cared for them with a bodily passion. To touch them, handle them, get the responsive thrill that came from passing one's fingers down the back of a tall calf-bound volume, that was one thing; to tamper with the inside was another. And to see these objects of his passion given into strange hands brought him the nearest approach to a tragic mood that he had ever known.

Together they read a page from the old tale of love in the month of May, a story where sorrow and laughter both turn into sweetest song. Its quivering emotion passed into the young man's heart, and he clenched his hands to shut temptation out. He wanted to take the girl in his arms, hold her close to him, protect her from the winds of heaven and from the eyes of men, master the mischief in her, subdue her, kneel at her feet and worship her. That quiver in her under lip had told him all he wished to know.

"It is very attractive binding," he said in haste.

"Yes," said Annice.

Sadly Penrose looked over toward them.

"Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avanti," he quoted.

For him it was a dull, unimaginative moment, when the senses seemed impervious to the finer influences of life and

beauty; the soul dead and uncreative. No new appreciation could come to him now, he said wistfully, as he watched the lovers in the alcove. In this insensate moment he had lost those hidden avenues of communication between himself and that wonderful outside world of beautiful things and beautiful people. It had touched him with a thousand fingers. From him, henceforth, he said drearily, there could be no response.

When Henry had left her, Annice leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes. The air seemed folding her in arms of rest. There were no problems, there was only peace. The fulfilment of life was there, in her pulses, in these causeless tears trying to force open her tightly closed eyes. The joy was so keen that it was pain. She could hear the oriole's passionate song floating in through an ivy-covered window just beyond her, and she opened her eyes to look. The tendrils of the vine, like bits of window-tracery come to life, were swaying in the breeze. The old fear of beauty, always associated with grass and flowers and the warmth of summer air, stung her, and she gazed at the corner-stone of the trefoils until her lips grew as sharp as their unbending edges. Was she playing deserter again? If the measure of desire was also the measure of wrong, how great was her present sin! Through the golden mist made of the tears in her eyes and the encompassing sunshine, she saw the iron hand of duty, pointing out toward Gordon Heights. To put all she cared for behind her, and to flee into the righteous paths of the things she did not want, this was virtue.

They were days of keen life that followed for Henry. It was his first passion, boyish, manly, intense. There were minutes of great happiness when Annice looked at him. There were minutes of torment when she looked away. No trace of coquettishness existed in the girl's nature, but Annice and her conscience together played worse havoc with Henry's nerves than coquetry could ever have done. The complete surrender of one minute to the

delight of his presence was succeeded so swiftly by the coldness of remembered resolution that the young man's eyes were eloquent with bewilderment and pain. Half-way through a confidential account of her childhood, she stopped, one day, refused to go on, and made so apparent her wish to be alone that Henry went away at once. Through the open window she had caught a glimpse of an old man, slightly bent, walking with unsteady steps. Everywhere the reproach of gray hair like her father's followed her. Everywhere the old pain thrust itself into present joy. She went to the window now and looked after Henry with wistful eyes. His coming brought the daylight to her; his going took the light away. She knew that she lived only in the minutes when he was with her, but she would not see him again, she said, setting her lips together. She would stem the great, incoming tide; she would bridle the whirlwind; she would let Henry go. Strong in her resolution, she pressed her forehead against the window-sash. Would he come again to-morrow?

He did come again to-morrow, but Miss Gordon was away. She had gone shopping at five o'clock, forgetting her own experience of the shop-girl's weariness at that hour. Henry, after a brief conversation with Mrs. Appleton, to whom his abstraction afforded welcome amusement, went away with a leaden sense of irrevocable loss. What did it mean? What was this impalpable barrier that Annice was thrusting between them? One priceless half-hour was gone from out the hours of his life. Through all eternity he could not overtake the joy that might have been his in that brief time.

That night he slept but little. Noises that he had never noticed before played on his nerves. A mouse was gnawing somewhere in the wall. A dog barked at intervals out on the street. Henry tossed, with wide-opened eyes, upon his bed. He was base, small, mean, unworthy of her, said his accusing inner consciousness, but what in the world did she want to treat a man like that for? He was

not fit to touch the hem of her garment, he said to himself as he went off to sleep at last—but oh, if he only could! Sleep was welcome, when it deigned to come, for every night the same dream returned. It was Annice, Annice clinging to his hand for protection. That touch seemed always to be on his fingers when he woke.

Henry carried his love into his class-room in those days. Between the questions that he asked his students he found himself wondering if any coming minute would be so sweet as that last one of perfect and speechless understanding that had come in a brief interview two days after Annice's attempt to run away from him. His voice followed his mood, and he talked of the tariff in tones of passionate entreaty, discussed the war-tax in accents of alternate pleading and despair. Listen to what he would, he heard only her voice, and that rare, individual laugh. Look where he would, he saw only the outline of that little head, beloved above all earthly things. His passion gave power to his work. Strangers who visited his class said that young Mr. Worthington was brilliant. His students wakened under a subtle stimulus that nobody understood, and spent long hours in the library in sudden zeal for learning. They did not know that their instructor sometimes read nowadays with his book upside down.

"What ails the boy?" asked Benedict Warren, dropping into the library one day. "I met him on the street, and he didn't look at me. Stalked on with his eyes fixed."

Professor Worthington looked over his glasses.

"A girl," he said briefly.

Warren's jaw dropped.

"Shut him up in his room," he suggested. "He oughtn't to be thinking of such things for ten years yet."

"He is twenty-six," said Alfred Worthington, shaking his head, "old enough for anything, I'm afraid. Only"—he paused—"if it had been somebody else."

"What's the matter with her?" asked Warren, seating himself and crossing his legs. He still had his hat on.

"Why — nothing whatever," admitted the professor. "She's a charming young woman. I presume it's just the notion of it. She's Miss Gordon — Gordon's daughter. I admit there are families with which I should rather see my own allied."

Warren lighted his pipe.

"The world would have been a great deal better off if there hadn't been any girls in it," he observed, "or children either," he added meditatively. "You've had more bother out of that young one of yours than he's worth, Worthington."

But his only answer was that old, contented, exasperating smile on his friend's face.

Henry told Miss Gordon one day about the trouble with his father that had saddened this whole winter for them both. She listened intently, and the likeness to her stern-faced grandmother deepened as she heard the tale of obedience to conviction.

"I am glad that you told me," she said. "To see any one do the thing he believes to be right is inspiration."

As Henry looked at her he was almost glad for all that misunderstanding, for the pain had slipped away, and through the jangling and discord, love came, like the beginning of music. He was in a region of great harmony, held safe from fret and jar. They were silent. Outside, the world was full of rain and the skies were dull, but for them there was glory in the air and breathing was intoxication. Mrs. Appleton, who was somewhere in the room, coughed slightly — she had perceived that it was time — and the spell was broken.

"I am going home next week," said Annice, abruptly.

The speechless dismay of Henry's face alarmed her. How could she go on to say what she had tried to say? It meant thrusting aside the hand stretched out to help her. It meant saying good-bye to the human being whose presence brought her the only sense of home there was for her in the world.

"I have taken a vow," she said, smiling, but looking very determined and erect. "It isn't a very novel kind, only I mean to keep it. It is only to stay with my father and take care of him, always."

"That would be very satisfactory," said Henry, with a laugh, "only your work might possibly be interfered with by other claims."

"Never!" said Annice, so sternly that the young man was alarmed. He could say nothing. There never was any chance to see Annice alone!

Mrs. Appleton was smiling behind her book.

"I was wrong about the flirting," she said, "only girls of to-day have found a new way to do it."

Henry's waking thoughts that night were filled with reproaches of Annice.

"Women are selfish, anyway," he groaned, clasping his pillow in pain. "They are morbid and unhealthy. Nothing less than misery contents them. They all call unhappiness a virtue, and they care for nothing but their own souls."

The thought that his lady could meditate devoting herself to a duty from which he was shut out stung him cruelly. She had actually been absent-minded, thinking of her own affairs instead of his! He took refuge in lofty musings concerning renunciation on his own part. He would win name and fame, and Miss Gordon should know what she had lost. He would devote himself to his father, that father who had suffered so for him. But sleep brought him the old dreams again, and with waking came the fierce longing just to see Annice, if even a long way off.

He could not work that day; he could not eat. His brain was muddled, and he dismissed his classes without giving any explanation. Determined not to go near his tormentor, he started for a long tramp, goaded by energy for which he could find no outlet, stung by fear of loss. Outside the city he climbed Long Meadow Hill. The world below him was a spring mist of faint blue and early

green. In the distance the sea touched the sky-line. Nearer, the grass of the marshes met the sea. The song of orioles and of bobolinks, the odour of apple-blossoms and of lilacs came up to him on the wind. He threw himself flat upon the ground where he could see only the outline of green grass against the sky.

Oh, these wasted moments when Annice was not near! The perfect joy of the brief time with her made the hours seem empty, cold, and leaden. Through these golden days of spring, life was slipping through his fingers in an unreal existence that knew no significance. He seized the grass under his hands. How could he strain from each minute the utmost that it could yield? In this world of men and women and of budding trees, life, exquisite life was going on, and he was missing it. The wish to penetrate, to know, was strong upon him, to break through the withholding curtain. Then, lying there upon the grass and dreaming of the days to come, the thought of death possessed him with sudden fear. It had a meaning now that it had never had before, that going out of the vivid sunlit world, with its faint blue hills, and the sound of peepers in the marshes. It was horrible. He lay very still, watching the slow white clouds against the blue.

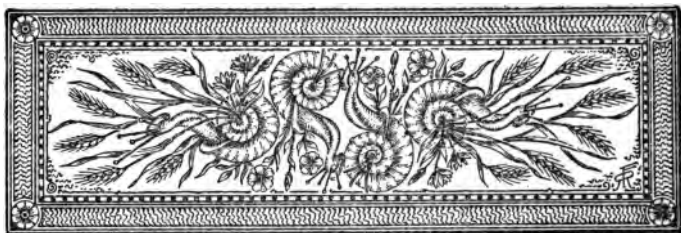
Suddenly he started to his feet. He must know his fate to-day. He would go down and face Annice Gordon. He would take her hands in his and keep them there. As he strode down the hill, his face was white, even to the lips. Once in the road, he discovered that last-year's burdocks were clinging to his clothes, and he picked them off slowly, smiling as he did it. This was not calling attire! He strode hurriedly along the dusty road into the city, nodding absent-mindedly to his students, passing as in a dream under the arching branches over the common.

He spoke very abruptly when he found Annice. His face was working in his strong emotion as she came in.

"You cannot go out of my life that way," he said, grasping both her hands in his strong, warm palms.

She drew them swiftly away.

"I must," she said. Her eyes begged him not to tempt her. He could not trust himself to speak, and he left her, looking as white as Antigone, and as firm.



CHAPTER XIX



UMOUR was busy in South Winthrop. The academic city was alive with whispers. In faculty circles, especially, excitement was great. Henry Worthington had perverted his office to the teaching of some wicked doctrine—the faculty-ladies who carried the reports were not sure what. He had made, in his class-room, a direct attack on Mr. Gordon, and had denounced dry-goods dealing as dishonest, calling it “organized robbery of the working classes.” The winter’s gossip that had followed the discovery of Mr. Gordon’s connection with Smith’s was revived. The reported slander roused indignation in the bosoms of his colleagues in church and club. Ladies of limited wealth, who were in the habit of stealing in secret over to Smith’s on bargain-days, felt their finer instincts outraged. It was ungentlemanly, they said; but then, Mr. Worthington was young. He would learn better when he grew up. That groundless optimism of age which hopes for youth wisdom like its own, when a sufficient number of years has passed, made excuses for Henry. Meanwhile, the reports took a darker tinge. Young Mr. Worthington, it was whispered, had called Mr. Gordon a scoundrel. The faculty-ladies were unanimous in demanding a public apology. He ought to make one to his

father, too. Was not the gift denounced by him the property of his father's department? Had he not said from his desk that no right-minded person would use money like that?

"It must come from associating with those dreadful foreigners," said Mrs. Edward N. Bellingham, talking busily to her caller, and fanning herself with her sandalwood fan. "I knew that no good could come of his going over there. It told on his manners. I could see that at Mrs. Appleton's dinner. I hope that Professor Worthington realizes now the consequences of thinking that Winthrop's educational advantages were not good enough for Henry. I should like to see the city in Europe or in America where they can be equalled!"

But Mrs. Bellingham never did.

Naturally, Henry and his father heard none of these reports. The end of the year was approaching, and they applied themselves with vigour to their accumulating work. They went their way, outwardly at peace. The faculty-ladies, when they met father and son upon the street, lowered their voices. Alfred Worthington's colleagues, chatting at the corner of the campus, or whispering in the library, changed the subject when he drew near. With Benedict Warren, all was different. His fellow-trustees came to sit on his verandah and give him points concerning the Worthington scandal. From each new expedition to the city, he returned laden with new rumours. He watched Alfred Worthington's face anxiously when they were together. He made a few inquiries of Henry concerning the unfortunate lecture. Hardest of all, he nerved himself to a little political work among the trustees. Surely, he grumbled, one May morning, as he set out in a fine drizzle, life grew harder as one grew older, and instead of more chances to rest one got only more demands for hard work.

It was a queer figure that presented itself at the elegant doorway of the Hon. Dwight S. Sanford that morning.

Benedict Warren had decided that he was the most influential of the trustees, and must be consulted first. The visitor put down his huge, shapeless umbrella as he rang the bell. His shabby coat was buttoned up close to his lean neck, showing, where the lapel was turned back, how much the garment had faded. His trousers were turned up at the bottom. Ushered into Mr. Sanford's smoking-room, he still clung to his umbrella, and his footprints, as well as those of his dog, were visible on the polished floor.

Mr. Sanford greeted his visitor with deference. To the newly rich, Benedict Warren's approval meant much, for the sanction of his name was social benediction. Benedict Warren stated his errand very briefly. He wanted Mr. Sanford to speak a good word for young Worthington, who would probably be brought up as a case for discipline at the June meeting of the trustees. Mr. Sanford shook his round fat head. He was a portly gentleman, with thin white hair making a fringe about his bald crown.

"I'd do anything in the world to oblige you, Warren," he said, tilting his chair back at a dangerous angle, and clasping his plump hands in his lap, "but there isn't any doubt in my mind that young Worthington ought to go. He's bringing forward dangerous doctrine. That isn't the brand of political economy that he's paid to teach in Winthrop University."

Mr. Sanford's expression was mild, despite the ferocity of his remarks.

"But he's only a cub," remarked Warren, pacifically. "He's too young to know what he's about."

"Then it's time we had somebody in that chair who does know what he's about," asserted Mr. Sanford, with vehemence. "I tell you, Warren, you don't realize the importance of this thing. All the boys in the city are rushing into college these days. It wasn't so when I was young, and it don't make the kind of man that was made then. Most of 'em it unfits for active life, anyway, without having this new kind of nonsense taught 'em. I tell

you, when it comes to having doctrine against the established order of things crammed down their throats, it's a serious matter. Now that attack on Gordon —"

Mr. Sanford spoke with the reverence of a man who had just thrust himself into a prominent position in the established order of things. Warren interrupted him. He was conscious of having used a wrong plea, and he was sulky because of Mr. Sanford's insubordination. Warren had seen the day when he could turn this man round his little finger.

"The boy says he never mentioned Gordon," he said.

Mr. Sanford placed his chair firmly upon four legs and stared at his visitor.

"I have it from a member of his class, sir," he stated, emphasizing each word by a finger-tap upon his knee, "that he said from behind his desk in St. Edmund's Hall, that money like Gordon's was not fit to touch. He ought to be shut up for slander. To my mind, the sooner he gets out of that place, the better for all parties concerned."

"I don't care a hang about the business," said Benedict Warren, rising, "only —" he hesitated a minute, failed to finish his sentence, and went dejectedly away. Things were beginning to look serious. Henry had made a worse mess than he had supposed, and Henry's father would have to suffer the consequences. From this first disastrous interview he had learned at least one lesson: hereafter he would try to adapt the argument to the man. He called next on Dr. Alison, pastor of the largest church of the city, and president of the Board of Trustees. The doctor was well-informed in regard to the matter, and more severe than Mr. Sanford had been. Again Warren pleaded for the son of his friend.

"It was only a blunder," he said. "We ought to give him another chance. He'll outgrow it."

"A blunder," remarked Dr. Alison, impressively, one large white finger thrust into the bosom of his clerical coat, "is a crime."

"But that kind of work ought to be in your line," remarked Benedict Warren. "As I understand it, young Worthington is striking out for the benefit of the poor. He seems to believe that setting people to think about the methods of gaining money will ultimately result in a lightening of the burdens laid on destitute wage-earners. Seems to me that kind of thing ought to appeal to the clergy."

Dr. Alison bestowed on his guest a benevolently condescending smile.

"Have you never observed, Mr. Warren," he inquired, "that our Lord never tried to disturb the existing order of things? 'I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.'"

"Doing as you would be done by might amount to a disturbance of the existing order of things," remarked Benedict Warren, dryly. He took his leave. The clergyman looked after him with pity. Perhaps Bible arguments were only wasted on a man who never came to church. Benedict Warren smiled humorously as he strolled down the street, neglecting to put up his umbrella, and letting the fine rain fall on his old brown hat.

"So the dominie thinks a blunder is a crime, does he?" he meditated to himself. "I hope he will live to commit one!"

Lawyer Denison, whom Warren visited in his office, knew nothing of the matter.

"Look here, Warren," he said, glancing up from the papers he was examining, "I haven't heard anything about this. If you will make a note of it, I'll try to see about it when I get through these. I'm up to my ears in the Wendover murder case."

He went back to his work. Warren looked wistfully round the room, whose furniture consisted of hard chairs and of pigeon-holes full of labelled documents. The thin, bent little man, with bright eyes too near together, was going to be of little use to him.

"Well," observed Warren, at last, "I only wanted to know your views. If you haven't got any, I s'pose there

may be difficulty about that. That young man has been saying foolish things in his class-room. The general opinion is that he'd better be asked to leave the university. Now, I don't think so. Nine men out of any ten are against me, but I am not convinced that I'm wrong. Taking his youth into account, and considering the standing the family had always had — ”

“Revolver with one chamber loaded found in his coat pocket,” observed the lawyer, gazing at his visitor with brilliant eyes, but not seeing him. “Money to the amount of — Hello! What are you talking about?”

But Benedict Warren was already thumping his way downstairs, feeling damp and discouraged. He made four more calls. The opposition to his own view of the matter naturally strengthened him in his own conviction, and he began to think of Henry with reluctant admiration. The boy had been plucky, at any rate. Crossing the common on his way home, he met Mr. Gordon.

“Morning!” said Benedict Warren.

“Good morning,” replied the merchant, with dignified cordiality.

“Better not tackle him,” thought Warren. “He's too much interested, and he's not the kind of man to love his enemies on week days.”

But Mr. Gordon did not wait. He came confidentially to Benedict Warren's side, and got his new gloves wet grasping the lapel of that gentleman's old brown coat.

“Warren,” he asked in a quick whisper, “have you heard anything about an attack young Worthington has made on me in public?”

Warren looked up at his neighbour's shining silk hat, then at the pale blue eyes, which turned uneasily away. Often, in looking at Mr. Gordon hastily, one caught him in an attempt to arrange his expression appropriately.

“He hasn't made any attack on you,” said Benedict Warren. “He's a gentleman.”

“Unmistakably he has,” insisted Mr. Gordon. His

grieved and benevolent expression was there at last. "He has made my gift to the university the occasion of a lecture denouncing —"

"The boy never mentioned you, Gordon, never alluded to you in any way," interrupted Warren. "He told me so himself."

"Not only that," continued Gordon, unconvinced — no Gordon had ever been convinced by any one else — "he took occasion to recall my dealing in the flour-trust a few years ago, and to say that the action of trusts was unscrupulous and full of corruption."

The two men were walking side by side now along one of the wet paths of the common. A little stream of water from Mr. Gordon's umbrella, held entirely over himself, trickled down on his companion's ear.

"Henry Worthington never knew anything about your connection with that deal until his lecture was over," asserted Warren, triumphantly. "I had the pleasure of telling him about it myself only day before yesterday. From all I can gather, he simply made some remarks about retail dry-goods dealing as it is managed at present in certain places, and his objections to it were first connected with you outside the class-room. That's not his fault, and if the shoe fits you'll have to put it on. If he criticised the kind of shady methods used in that place of yours on Dowden Avenue, he probably said only what was just, and you know it, Gordon."

The discussion that followed, as hot as it was brief, did not concern Henry Worthington. It ended in Mr. Gordon's turning abruptly away without taking leave, his face red with indignation. His ears were tingling with Warren's last words.

"You can't do it, Gordon," he had said, with exasperating calmness. "You can't set up to be a saint and use all the tricks of a knave, too. You've got to choose. If the public recognizes this fact, you can't blame it."

Benedict Warren stopped to light his pipe. Then he

walked slowly home, inwardly penitent, in spite of the little grin of satisfaction on his face. He reviewed his last remarks, and confessed to himself that he had not been born a politician.

He pinned his failing hopes now to the June trustee-meeting. He would do what he could at that. When the day came he arrived, five minutes late. Twenty-three gray heads were gathered round the great bare table in the official chamber at St. Cuthbert's Hall. Beyond them, open windows let in the sweet June air, and the smell of new hay floated up with it. Somebody, a long way off, was running a lawn-mower. Benedict Warren nodded to Dr. Alison, who was occupying the chair with his usual dignity. A murmur of surprise and of pleasure ran through the room as he entered. Spite of his usual absence from these meetings he had been retained a member of the Board because of his family, his position, the weight of his word when he chose to speak it. The fact that he usually refused it added to its significance when it came. An unmistakable whimper followed him as he came in and seated himself in the twenty-fourth chair, the only vacant one. Ulysses had been left outside, Ulysses, who had never before been shut out from anything that his master attended.

"No, sir, I do not go to church," Benedict Warren had once announced. "I don't go anyplace where I can't take my dog. What isn't fit for him isn't fit for me."

Preliminary business relating to Commencement, to the application of funds for the expenses during the first months of the coming year, was quickly despatched. The chairman urged the business on in order to reach the question of the day. This was the most serious meeting of the year. After a moment of profound hush, broken only by the scratching of the secretary's pen, Mr. Sanford, at the suggestion of the president, introduced the business of the day. The question was, the proper course of action on the part of the Corporation of Winthrop University, in

view of the recent statements in his class-room of Associate Professor Henry Worthington, regarding the policy of the university, and the business-methods of an honoured member of the Board.

Free discussion followed. It was a terrible scene for Benedict Warren. All round the table he saw only face after face full of frozen respectability. The solemnity with which his friend's son was arraigned, the awe-stricken horror of tone paralyzed him. In the lift of an eyebrow, in the expression of a pair of folded hands, the suggestion was: "He is not of us. He is an outcast and apart." It was a scene like that in which men in days before had judged one another to death. If somebody would only smile! Benedict Warren wanted Ulysses! Dogs were so human, and that whimper coming through the closed door, reassuring as it was, was maddening. The summer air brought with it tempting suggestions of fishing by quiet streams, and Warren's old grudge against Henry revived under the manifold discomforts of this hour. That grudge was a quarter of a century old. It was he who, having heard from his father, the trustee, of Alfred Worthington's promotion from an assistant-professorship to the chair of full professor, had hurried with speed to Lancaster Place to tell him. He had found his friend reading by a table, his left foot on a cradle, which he was slowly rocking.

"Hush," Alfred had said, with uplifted hand, "the boy's asleep."

From that day to this, the boy had always come first.

Benedict Warren had taken no part in this discussion, beyond making the statement that Henry Worthington had made no reference whatever to Mr. Gordon in the lecture under consideration. He had been met by the reply that this did not alter the case, as the question was broader than that of mere personal attack. Of teaching subversive to the established order, social and economic, he had certainly been guilty, teaching most certainly pernicious, all the more so because of the strong hold he had obtained over the

young men under his charge. Of a great battle where the combatants are all upon one side, there is little story to tell. The Trojans had it all their own way in this skirmish, for there were no Greeks, and even the gods were on that day all of one mind. The opinion that vibrated in the outwardly impersonal suggestion of the chairman was echoed by Mr. Sanford, and it resounded in the legal tones of Mr. Denison. It spread itself in the look of happy innocence on Mr. Gordon's face. The trustees of Winthrop seemed solid in their condemnation of the young offender against established laws.

"We must act," said Mr. Sanford, starting to tip back his chair, then remembering with a start where he was, "at once, and decisively. We must make an example of this. The faculty shall not coerce the trustees."

Here the chairman asked if any one wished to make a motion to express the feeling of the Corporation in this matter, and then he settled back into his chair with a sense of duty done.

Then Benedict Warren rose. He had arrayed himself in a suit of black, of a fashion thirteen years old, and he had shaved the stubble of beard from his face. The thin figure with its distinguished profile and historic jaw drew the attention instantly of three and twenty pairs of eyes. He stood apart from the group at the table, waited for a minute, then began. He was not an orator, he said, with his long, slow drawl. It was a matter of thirty years since he had made a speech. Generally he preferred his own opinions, silence, and a pipe. But now he was tempted to utter a word of protest, inasmuch as the honourable body to which he belonged seemed about to make a mistake.

In his opinion the question at issue was broader in its nature than any one had suggested. It was not simply the punishment of a single instructor for a rashly uttered opinion; it was not the right or the wrong of industrial conditions existing to-day at Winthrop and elsewhere; it

was not the cleanliness or the uncleanness of money, but something of graver moment than all these. It was the question of a man's liberty to hold an opinion of his own and to state it.

"The right of an American citizen to think, if he can, even in a university, has been conceded for many years," said Benedict Warren, with that composed smile rippling over his lean face. "That a man has been able, under conditions so unfavourable as those of an ordinary academic life, to use his brain independently should be cause for congratulation, not for condemnation on the part of the university Corporation. The example will not prove dangerous. I doubt if it will rouse the rest of the faculty to think things out for themselves."

Suddenly his tone changed from irony to earnest. Fire was kindled in his deep-set eyes. The action and the belief of all Benedict Warren's life issued in words stern, incisive, impassioned. One conviction, at least, this freelance in life had held with unswerving devotion, a belief in the sacredness of liberty. Was it well, he asked, for a man, in economic or in religious matters, to accept his creed ready-made? Must not its links be beaten out in the passionate smiting of life? There was no worth to a man in another man's conviction. Was not the willingness of this young instructor to strike out for himself a proof of vitality and genuineness that the university could ill afford to throw away? In life like that, not in the handing down of traditional formulæ, lay the real strength of an institution like this. Organic growth, not mechanical operation, should be the law of its existence. Mistakes this young thinker, and others like him, would make, undoubtedly, but mistakes retrieved were power, and the end was not yet.

"I am not trying to uphold the boy's views," said Warren, changing his tone. "They may be nonsense. I was convinced of that at first, but I am not so sure now. However, such as they are, he has a right to them. The

principle involved in this issue has been at stake in all the great crises of history, repression *versus* freedom. Where the former has conquered, disaster has inevitably followed. It is too late to learn over again the lesson of the Star Chamber, of Plymouth Rock, of 1776."

"For what," he added, "does an institution like Winthrop exist? Enemies will say that it is made up of idlers who shirk the world's hard work. Friends will say that it stands for the pursuit of pure truth. If then, it hinders, instead of helping, the march of thought; if it places a restraining hand over the mouth of the man who would speak what seems to him truth; if it blinds the eyes that try to see, has it any reason for existing? Acting thus, it ranges itself with the walled mediæval convent and should have been left behind with the Dark Ages. If it does not mean unflinching search for truth, in perfect freedom, it would be better," he paused, "better to tear down its walls and dig a fish-pond. And I'm not sure," he added meditatively, "that that wouldn't be a good idea anyway. It would make a fine pond."

"What are we afraid of?" he demanded, turning suddenly to the president. "If we adopt this policy of repression, we prove either that we are afraid to have the truth known, and so try to smother it, like dishonest men; or that, with fine conceit, we consider that we have found the truth once for all and try to take her under our protection. The first part of that action is fallacy. We cannot grasp the truth entire. We shall be happy if, by following after in swift pursuit, we can touch the hem of her garment. The second part is worse fallacy. She does not need our protection. It is she who is the protector, and we cannot afford to patronize the truth. A few mistakes cannot kill her. She is alive and immortal. Long ago a wiser than we said: 'And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to mis-doubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; who

ever knew Truth put to the worse on a free and open encounter?"

It was a far less important consideration, he added, but let the students once suspect that the doctrines taught in their class-rooms were dictated by an interested authority, and so base an authority as money, and the class-rooms would be empty, deservedly empty, in a few months. Repression, bondage, political interference, would be the end of Winthrop's power.

"Therefore, gentlemen," said Benedict Warren, looking slowly round the circle of astonished faces, "think twice before you take away from Winthrop University her price-less tradition of academic liberty."

There was a long pause of utter silence. Dr. Alison thanked the gods that his position as chairman permitted, even demanded, silence. The minds of the Corporation were staggering under the rush of foreign ideas following this address. Mr. Sanford sat with his mouth slightly open. He had meant to make the motion, but perhaps he had better not, if Warren felt that way about it. At last the thin, clear voice of Lawyer Denison broke the silence.

"Mr. President," he observed, standing and twirling his eye-glasses in long, thin fingers, "much as I respect the mind and the opinions of my honoured colleague who has just spoken, I venture to differ with him on every point which he has brought up. I move that the secretary of the Board of Trustees communicate to Associate Professor Henry Worthington the recommendation of the Board that he resign his position in Winthrop University."



CHAPTER XX



F Mrs. Appleton had not been slightly irritated that Sunday morning when she came to breakfast, the course of destiny would have been different. Even our bad tempers may help turn the mill-wheels of the gods. She was sorry that Annice was going away so soon. She was irritated because Professor Worthington's sister had come back unexpectedly from the West, and she had to lunch with her on Tuesday, instead of going boating on the river as she had wished. Above all, she was chagrined because her paper at the club last night had not been good. No one had told her so; no one would have dared; but Mrs. Appleton knew. As usual, Virgil suffered the consequences.

"By the way, Virgil," she said, putting down his coffee-cup before she had begun to fill it, "did you ever look up that protégé of yours whom you told me about before I went to Florida?"

"Oh," said Mr. Penrose, blankly, looking down at his roll. "The fact is, Juliette, it slipped my mind."

Mrs. Appleton's smile would have unsainted many of those whose names are in the calendar.

"I made an effort," he continued, clearing his throat, his voice rising in that almost imperceptible cadence that for

him marked indignation. "I visited her place of employment one day, Smith's, in North Winthrop —"

He stopped, conscious of the greatest blunder he had ever made. Annice was gazing at him with wide-open, terrified eyes, as she had done that day from behind the counter. He had never forgotten that look. It burned still in his inner consciousness. His hands dropped into his lap, and he sat, paralyzed with anxiety lest her malady should break out in consequence of his thoughtless speech.

"Something diverted my attention," he said hurriedly. "Really, I've forgotten what it was."

The spirit of iniquity was strong at that moment in Mrs. Appleton.

"How did you enjoy Smith's?" she asked.

Her brother turned his dazed brown eyes full upon her.

"How did I enjoy *Smith's*?" he asked. "I —"

Then he saw Annice again and stopped, remembering her twofold connection with the place. What kind of remark would be most soothing? A conciliatory one.

"I liked it very much," he said gently, giving his sister a warning glance, Annice a pitying one.

Mrs. Appleton was deeply puzzled. To tease two people at the same time was rare pleasure to her. But why, since the secret of the teasing rested with her and with Annice, did Virgil look so knowing?

"I think you never told me that girl's name."

"Her name," said Penrose, reluctantly, crushing his napkin and laying it beside his plate, "her name is Mary Burns."

Annice gave a great start. Was Mary Burns the heroine of the story Mr. Penrose had told that day in the shop, and the victim of her father's fraud? The minute that she had dreaded during all the weeks of her stay with Mrs. Appleton had come. Annice was equal to it.

"I know that girl," she said quietly. "I met her when I was working in my father's shop. She has a sick sister, and if anybody ever deserved help, she does."

Mr. Penrose gazed at his lost love in utter astonishment. "My father's shop, working in my father's shop," he repeated to himself. Had he been about to lay his life down at the feet of a young woman who could say that so calmly? Mrs. Appleton's conscience smote her as she saw in the girl's face and in her brother's the nervous excitement that had followed her bantering remark. She rose from the table, and laid her hand soothingly on the girl's shoulder.

"There, there, there," she said. "Don't explain. It's all over and forgotten. And Virgil would hardly be interested, anyway."

It remained for Mr. Penrose to save the day, and he did it gallantly, unheeding, so to speak, his sister in the process. He rose to all his elegant height, and his lost accent came back to him.

"It would, perhaps, be more fitting, Juliette, for a lady to act in this matter. If *you* will discover the whereabouts of Mary Burns — Miss Gordon can probably help you — and will investigate her circumstances, you may draw upon me to any extent for pecuniary aid, if that is necessary. I have always felt that I owe a debt to her mother."

He beat a magnificent retreat. Mrs. Appleton looked after him admiringly.

"Virgil is fine when he is roused," she remarked. "He simply needs stimulus."

She thought no more of the matter as they went to church at St. Michael's. The quiet, the rich lights and shadows of the stained windows, the clear voices of the surpliced choir boys, always brought their own suggestions with them. She sat now in her severely beautiful black gown and bonnet in the ancestral pew, and thought that she would be better and sweeter-tempered next week, and she would have a summer wrap like the one three seats ahead, but more elegant. The world only gave hints to Mrs. Appleton of what was to issue from her creative mind enlarged and beautiful. She half-dreamed, for the

day was warm, and a bee was humming an accompaniment to the service, of a time, somewhere, when she could have her daughter back, Frances, with her curving neck and girlish shoulders, and the old maternal passion came back in sleep. She saw and felt the touch of the girl's hair against her cheek. Here her mind wandered off to the luncheon she was to give on Friday, and she hoped that Morton would not send such miserable ices again. Then she realized that everybody was singing, "For thee, O dear, dear country," and that she was sitting still in the pew. She rose to her feet with a start.

Annice remembered, at first. The mention of Mary's name brought back all the old pity. She saw again the poor little room, and the tired eyes of the two sisters. They were cousins, then, she and these girls whose kindness to her had been a revelation of the beautiful heart of common things. She would find some way to undo that old wrong. Here she looked at one of the stained glass windows, where St. Michael was standing, with his sword drawn, and one triumphant foot upon the dragon's neck. She had never thought of it before, but the young saint looked like Henry Worthington. That outline of the nose, the determined mouth, the hair waving back from the forehead, were his. His, too, or so it should be, the aureole. But the eyes were not natural. They were fixed upon the dragon. They ought to turn and gaze upon her, with that look — Annice shut her eyes to realize the look more keenly, and then, in an agony, the consciousness of what she had done overcame her. She had silenced that voice to which her whole being vibrated. That expression of bitter hurt and longing in Henry's eyes as she had sent him away had strengthened her for her refusal. She had not realized that she would need those eyes always to sustain her heroism in letting him go! She forgot her own resolution. She forgot Mary Burns. Wonder and delight and pain chased through her heart, all melting into sorrow at the thought that Henry had gone, for she loved

him as only a Puritan girl can love, with the suppressed passion of generations kept warm under the snow.

But Professor Penrose remembered. He was drinking in the full æsthetic and spiritual beauty of the ritual that he loved. He was enjoying, with an artist's appreciation, the relief of the rector's snow-white hair and solemn gown against the carven oak of chair and pulpit. His ears were attuned to the swelling organ music, but Professor Penrose remembered Mary Burns. His was a sensitive nature, alive to indefinable influences of spiritual force, and he had a growing feeling that something was wrong. The little gambrel-roofed house where he had first seen the child became real to him. He could see the poplar tree by the door, and the winding path across the bridge by the brook, to the barn. The yellow head of the little girl, the plump, troubled face of her mother, with fine wrinkles all over it like that of a Gerard Dou portrait, and the brown skin of the father, with his gray-fringed chin, stood out almost as distinctly for his memory as they had done for his eyes ten years ago. Those people had been good to him in an hour of need, and he had forgotten. Truly, he had left undone those things that he ought to have done, and he bowed his head in unwonted penitence.

It was Professor Penrose who led the charge that day at luncheon. Unlike other people, Mrs. Appleton refused to dine at noon on Sunday. Why one should infringe upon the laws of nature by changing the dinner hour on the day that was to be kept holy, she did not see, and change was bad for Virgil's nerves. So they lunched as usual at two.

"By the way, Juliette," asked her brother, as he served the salad, "have you taken any steps in that matter we spoke of this morning?"

"What matter?" asked Mrs. Appleton.

He made no taunts.

"The relief of the young girl we were speaking about this morning. I have been thinking about her. I find

from Miss Gordon that she is trying to live on a salary ludicrously inadequate to the barest needs of life, and I have an impression—it is strange, but these subtle psychic influences we really cannot escape—I have an impression that she is in need of help. Should you mind going this afternoon?”

“Why, Virgil,” remonstrated Mrs. Appleton, with her mind full of her afternoon nap, “isn’t this a little sudden, after ten years? and I haven’t the slightest idea where to find her. Smith’s, of course, is closed.”

“I know where she lives,” said Annice. “May I go with you?”

“But,” said Mrs. Appleton, hesitating.

“Do not go if you do not feel like it, Juliette,” said Mr. Penrose, gently. “If you do not, I shall, however.”

Mrs. Appleton went. In a matter demanding practical energy, she had never yet been outdone by Virgil.

“It is strange,” she said, as they threaded their way through the crowded streets, full of people enjoying to the full the Sunday idleness and the sunshine, “it is strange about Virgil. If the world were rushing to destruction before his eyes, he would watch it calmly with folded hands. His critical opinion as to what was the matter would be absolutely correct, but he wouldn’t unfold his hands.”

She forgot her brother’s limitations in her enjoyment of the change from the sanctified calm of South Winthrop for the noise and colour of the North. Her usual self had been laid aside like a mask, and she watched with unfeigned delight the little groups of workmen out walking with their families. She studied, with an interest that was frankly returned, the faces of the dealers in old clothes, who stood shrouded in their long beards, at their shop doors. It was her first visit to this part of the city. Annice tried to usher her quickly past an overflowing baker shop in the Italian quarter, where loaves lay comfortably on the floor, and flies sat comfortably on the loaves.

“I haven’t enjoyed anything so much in years,” said Mrs.

Appleton. "Do you suppose if I came to live in the slums I should be as happy as these people are?"

The look in her eyes belied her smile. She was gazing at the people about her, and down the long lines on both sides of the streets. The little daughters of these families seemed all to be alive! Women filed past, their dresses open at the throat, their babies on their arms, and they made unintelligible remarks as they scrutinized Mrs. Appleton's attire. One little boy ran ahead of her, shouting, "See the bloomin' swell!" The lady patted him on the head, and gave him ten cents to be quiet. A dirty little Jewish girl ran out and clasped her hand. Mrs. Appleton put her fingers under the child's chin, and raised the little face toward her, then stooped, and almost kissed it. Those were Frances's eyebrows. Her courage did not falter until she faced the dark stairway of the tenement-house where Mary Burns lived.

There was trouble enough in the little family in Salutation Street, but no more trouble than there had been for the last five weeks. Jennie had dragged herself out to church. It was the first time for many days that she had been upon the street, and her short walk exhausted her. When the four-o'clock service was over, a sympathetic neighbour came to take her home. She asked if Mary had found a new place yet, and Jennie learned through her the news that her sister had left Smith's more than a month ago. The news came like a stinging blow upon the head, and Jennie went helplessly home with her friend, too weak at that moment to climb the long flights of stairs, too dazed to dare think what this calamity meant. Mary, at home, leaned out of the window, piteously glad for this minute of solitude in which to face her own despair alone. Her face was gray like Jennie's now, and in it was visible the long, slow crushing out of life and hope. She was idly turning over in her fingers, as she had done so often in the last two weeks, that note of Mr. Smith's. She read it again, admiring the beautiful rounded letters with their care-

ful shading and their flourishes. Could a bad man write like that, she wondered? Maybe, all along, she had been flying in the face of their one chance of salvation. Maybe, all along, he had been like this, merely kind.

The nuns were walking in their garden, two by two, counting the beads upon their rosaries. They were praying, Mary knew, and she was glad that there were people who still could do that. The little new leaves were waving on the ivy that covered the wall, around the white Christ in the niche, and a fragrance of summer floated up from the apple-trees of the garden, and from the rose-bushes along the wall. A bell rang, and the nuns went slowly in to service. She could hear the voices of their singing: "*Jesu, misericordia*," prayed the music. Mary flung herself upon her knees by the window. The old heroic, overstrained temperament, capable of doing in a moment a deed of martyrdom to be repented for a lifetime, triumphed, for the moment.

"I'll do it!" she said to herself. She had made the resolve a dozen times, and had retracted it. "What does it matter? What does anything matter, compared with Jennie? I'll ask that man for money. I don't care what it means."

It was quite a long time after this that she heard a knock at the door, and rose from her knees as she said, "Come." The interval had been full of the old fluctuations of feeling; on one side was intense repugnance; on the other, despair. When her visitors entered she stared at them with amazement. Why was Annie Whitney here with this fine lady? But she held out her hand and greeted her cordially.

"Where did you go to?" she asked. "I've been wondering about you this long time."

Annice, to Mrs. Appleton's surprise, bent forward and kissed her. It was a kind of apology for her father's sin. Then a time of great embarrassment followed, when no one knew where to look or what to say. Annice was wonder-

ing why Mary Burns's hands were so hot, and why the colour had faded so from her hair. Mrs. Appleton was studying the room, and nothing escaped her. She noted the clean dish-towel, the patched bedspread, the brown paper pasted over the places in the walls where the plaster had been broken, the tiny wooden tub that served for the sisters' bath. The cleanliness fascinated her, as did the cracked blue china on the what-not in the corner. The errand of mercy was taking the form of farce. Annice felt her tongue slowly stiffening as if paralyzed. She could not treat this cousin as if she were a pauper. She could not tell why she had come.

Mary broke the silence.

"Did you get a new place?" she asked.

Annice blushed painfully, and Mrs. Appleton laughed.

"No," said Annice. "Are you still at Smith's?"

"I lost my place," said Mary Burns, simply.

They talked at random for a few minutes, then the visitors took their leave. Mrs. Appleton thanked heaven when she reached the courtyard below.

"I don't think those girls need advice from us," she remarked, as she stepped into the light. "We might come down to learn some of their virtues. Did you see —"

"I didn't see anything," said Annice, excitedly, "except that girl's face. She has changed so! I am going back to find out what the trouble is. Will you wait? It will take only a minute."

It took half an hour. Mrs. Appleton was at a loss to know what to do. Through windows all about the court curious eyes stared at her, and the eager chattering of the Italian tongue greeted her ears. At last she deliberately seated herself on an upturned banana cart, and studied her surroundings with eyes that let nothing escape. Children crowded around her. One tiny boy in a gingham dress came up to her, smoking a cigarette. She tried to take it from him, smiling as she did so, but he clasped it more closely in his little hand so that it burnt a hole in his apron. She

noticed that a black-eyed boy snatched from a smaller one a banana that he was eating.

"Don't do that," said Mrs. Appleton.

"He mustn't have it," said the older boy, politely.
"Don't you know you mustn't eat anything to-day?"

"Why?" asked the lady.

"'Cause if you do, the thing that comes down out of the sky in summer will come down and hit you."

The children had come close to Mrs. Appleton. Curious little fingers shyly touched her gown, and very dirty, small bare feet trod on hers.

"You mean that you will be struck by lightning if you eat anything on fast day?" she asked her young instructor.

He nodded.

"Why?"

"'Cause," he answered.

"'Cause why?"

"'Cause it belongs to somebody up there, not God, no, I know all about God, but I mean the ladies, yes, that's it, the Virgin. She'll send it after you if you eat to-day. Anyway, that was a bad boy I took it away from. He hits his father and mother, 'stead of their hittin' him."

Mrs. Appleton's liberal education was interrupted by the arrival of Annice. The girl tried to speak, as they left the court together, but her lips refused to move. Her face was full of tragic consciousness that, in her mission to the many who suffer, she had overlooked the bitter need near at hand.

"What is it, child?" asked Mrs. Appleton.

"It's nothing, only —" and the girl's voice broke into a little gasp. They forced their way out of the crowd and found a quiet square where a few trees stood over a little green plot that broke the dreariness of the endless line of uniform brick houses. A Salvation-Army orator was haranguing a little group of people at one corner. Annice found her voice and told the whole pitiful story that she had heard in the room upstairs.

"For five weeks," she repeated, with a hard little sob, "she has been tramping the streets of this city, trying to get work, starving herself to keep her sister from knowing. I said that I would send her a check to-morrow, and she put down her head and cried like a child. She was going," Annice's voice again stuck in her throat, "she was going to let that man help her."

"What man?" asked Mrs. Appleton.

"That slimy man who manages my father's shop. He has always persecuted her, and she hated him. They were good to me when they thought I was suffering, and I—I let them go."

They had neared the little group at the corner, and the voice of the orator reached them, as he stood with the vivid colours of his uniform shining out against the dingy houses of the square.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," he quoted solemnly.

A queer look came into Mrs. Appleton's face.

"That wasn't said about women," she remarked grimly.



CHAPTER XXI



RS. APPLETON insisted that Annice should accompany her to the luncheon at the Worthingtons'. The professor had invited her specially, with the old-time courtesy that always charmed Mrs. Appleton.

"Is there any reason for your not wanting to go?" she asked the girl. "I should hate to have you hurt the professor's feelings. I am very fond of him. They don't make that kind of gentleman nowadays. Henry will never be his father's equal."

Annice decided that she would rather go than explain. She was glad to escape at any price from the scrutiny of Mrs. Appleton's eyes as that lady watched the effect of her remarks.

The sister who had come from the West had filled with her presence the entire house at Lancaster Place. Her possessions extended from the best bedroom to the library. Zuni pottery stood on the parlour floor, and Indian hammocks rested on the dining-room chairs. She had presented her brother with a cow-boy lariat, and had been hurt as he mildly inquired what he could use it for. To Henry she had given a pair of beaded moccasins, remembering him as the little boy whom she had offered to bring up. All her old friends had flocked to visit her, drawn by the

freshness of atmosphere and the air of adventure that she had brought from the plains. Unwonted sounds of kissing haunted the front door, and black-clad ladies invaded the library at eleven o'clock in the morning.

The windows of the old dining-room, opening to the piazza floor, were open through the luncheon-hour that day. June breezes crept in through the wistaria vines and the clematis that had made a screen from pillar to pillar. The professor did the honours as host with the touch of formality that had always clung to him, and he watched his sister in her seat opposite him, half in pride, half in terror, wondering what she would say next. The life of army officer's wife had developed for her both brain and muscle. She had cast off the conventions of her native city, and she laughed, her black eyes shining like coals in her dark brown skin, at the effete civilization of the Eastern town. No one else had to talk when she was there. She led the conversation through the ascent of the Rockies, encounters with rebellious Indians upon the plains, and rattlesnake-hunts in the foot-hills.

The professor was deeply grieved. He had insisted on Miss Gordon's presence for the sole purpose of making Henry happy, penitent for those moments when he had resented the boy's interest in her. Henry had met the suggestion with a stony glare of the eyes, then had insisted that this should be a ladies' luncheon, and that he and his father should stay down town. He had been overruled by the professor, who attributed this perversity to bashfulness, and here he was, face to face with Annice Gordon and as pale as she. He bent his eyes upon his plate as long as possible, then he looked up, and the misery in his eyes met full the misery in hers. Mrs. Appleton was diverted. She understood the situation, of course. Why else had she insisted that Annice should come? But the professor saw only his son's stolid countenance and was ashamed of the boy.

It ended, mercifully, at last. Henry almost groaned

with relief when the chairs were pushed back and a way of escape seemed open. As the guests filed out into the hallway to look at the curiously woven baskets that his aunt exhibited with such pride, Henry moved toward the open window and the piazza, wondering how he had lived through the last hour. A detaining hand held him prisoner. The professor walked after his guests into the great hall that swept through the house, and he kept a firm, but affectionate hand upon the shoulder of his son. Mrs. Appleton's eyes gleamed. She had not been so well amused once throughout the whole winter. She smiled gratefully at the professor when she heard him ask Henry to show Miss Gordon the garden, and she resigned herself as chief victim to the conversation of the lady from the West.

The Worthington garden had been a wonder in the days of Henry's grandfather. Sweeping back behind the house to the other street, and protected there by a tall spruce hedge, it had been, in the family's palmy days, a miracle of gardening. It was neglected now. There was no money with which to take care of it, but the professor stoutly refused to part with an inch of the land. This sacred ground should not be cut up into building lots during his lifetime, he said. Now there were great tangles of old rose-bushes and of snow-berry shrubs. Lilies-of-the-valley had spread into a thick carpet. In a shady corner, hardy rock-ferns were running wild. The box-borders were ragged, and the whole place, with its bloom of neglected tulips and narcissus in the spring, of hollyhocks and roses in the summer, was given over to bees and butterflies for their own.

Henry ushered Miss Gordon, in perfect silence, down one of the irregular narrow paths, where grass grew in tufts among the gravel. Someway, the heavy perfume of the June roses and the syringas made it harder to bear. There she was, standing, as he had wished to see her stand, in days when hope was still alive, close by the cut-leaf birch

tree. She turned and spoke, with a woman's feeling that somebody ought to make a remark.

"Your garden is very beautiful," she said.

"Oh, don't!" groaned Henry.

She looked at him inquiringly.

"We haven't got to be polite and converse, have we?" he asked. "I can't stand it."

The girl trembled a little and was still. They walked on, turning now to face the old house, with its long lines of white against the blue, and its peculiar trees, button-wood, poplar, hemlock, guarding its walls; now to face the solemn green hedge of spruce against the west. Annice stopped at a corner, lifted a great crimson rose, single-petalled and golden at the heart, in her fingers, then looked up at the face above her.

"I want you to give me some advice," she said wistfully.

"I shall be very glad to be of service to you," he said. His tone was chilly.

"It is about that question of the money." The girl's voice begged piteously for sympathy. "We have never talked about it, about Smith's, since I was there, but I haven't forgotten any of the things you said about it. Of course I can't go on using money that I disapprove of."

"Then I do not see," said Henry, eagerly, with a changed voice, "how you are going to stay and take care of your father always."

The feminine, repentant, impulsive soul of the girl was reflected in her changing eyes.

"I could earn my living in some way," she said feebly, "and take care of him too."

Henry had vowed to be silent, therefore he spoke. His eyes had been following the line where the girl's hair met her forehead, and lingering on the curve of her cheek. His lips were white.

"Annice," he groaned, "don't keep thrusting things between us. I love you, I love you, I love you."

She looked up, frightened, then looked down again.

The young man, by great effort, kept himself from stooping to kiss the part of her hair. There was silence for a minute. The murmur of insects, the wind among the leaves, made a sound like the sound of running water.

"Can't you love me back?" said Henry, desperately.

She swayed toward him a minute as the birch tree was swaying in the wind. Then she drew away again.

"I must not," she said.

"Do you want to drive me mad?" he asked fiercely.

"You are mine, mine. I can feel your heart-beats in my pulses. You are more I than I am myself. When I say anything you are speaker and listener too. And you are going to tear yourself away from me just for—I don't know what for, but I've been in hell since Friday."

The girl's eyes watched him, helplessly. Every struggle she had made to get away had carried her nearer and nearer his arms, and she knew it.

"It is only because of my duty," she whispered.

"It is because you don't care," he said, with his voice full of a dull hopelessness.

"It is because I care so much," said the girl, with sudden passion. "Can't you see, why are you so stupid? Every hair of your head is dearer to me than anything else in the world."

Her eyes were alight with the fire hidden so long. Henry bowed his head, for the minute was sacred, then he turned and took her in his arms, forgetting time and place. He was faint, and the world seemed to fade away like mist. The curtain hiding the invisible had been pierced at last, and he did not know whether the perfume that greeted him belonged to the garden of his childhood, or to the land of mystery that had opened. Annice, with his kiss upon her lips, knew, in one prescient moment, all the future, felt those coming days of vivid service in love's name. The tumult of its long gladness was in her veins, and the dust of her grave seemed near and sweet. She opened her eyes and freed herself, then stood there among the flowers with

tingling cheeks, like a woman facing life in the sunrise of creation.

"It is of no use," she said solemnly. "I cannot stay away from you, and I have tried so hard."

From the library window the professor had seen all. He withdrew hastily as if reproaching himself for an intrusion that was not his fault; then went over and bowed his head upon his wife's writing-desk, weighed down by a many-sided sense of pain. Henry was all he had, all he had left, and now? Mrs. Appleton, glancing up a minute later, saw at a distance, framed in the square doorway of the huge hall, the two lovers walking side by side most innocently down the garden path, with a background of green.

"I presume Annice is calming his mind by telling him that she cannot see him again," thought Mrs. Appleton, "and he won't know enough to capture her *vi et armis*."

Then she went back to the baskets, and listened to her friend for an hour and a half without saying a word. There are saints whose names are not in the calendar, and there are saintly minutes in the lives of most sinners. She really could not interrupt. Annice did not come to her rescue. Professor Worthington, who had gone to the library for a book, had not come back, and Mrs. Appleton wondered why. She had never before known him guilty of a subterfuge. With patience she had never yet shown she waited through that whole afternoon. She, too, had once been a lover, and those June days had been like this.

They discussed all the past and all the future in the old garden that afternoon. Henry restrained himself from putting a wreath of flowers in the girl's hair, remembering that they were not savages in the forest, and wishing that they were.

"When did you find it out?" asked Annice, loath to let go the sweet old theme.

"The first time I set my eyes on you," answered Henry.

"You didn't care about me then," exclaimed Annice, with wide-opened eyes. "It wouldn't have been proper."

"I didn't care what was proper," he remarked, vehemently. "I don't now. I wanted to take care of you from the very first. I was desperately afraid something would happen to you, and I thought —"

"What did you think?" she begged.

"I thought that you were very pretty, and extremely polite for a shop-girl."

"You looked scared," she said, with a little laugh. "You were so relieved when I answered your questions, and you sat down as if you had come to stay."

"Did you expect me to come again?"

"I thought nothing about it," said Annice, severely. "You were a stranger, and I did not know anything about you, except that you were a gentleman. Would you have liked me to want you to come again?"

"If I had been a stranger, no. As I was I, yes. Annice, are you real?" He had reached out a finger to touch her sleeve. So many times in sleep he had touched her, and had wakened!

"I think I have loved you from all eternity," said Henry. "Before I saw you I had been puzzled and troubled about many things. After that they all fell into their proper places. I knew what they all meant after I had seen your face, all life," he added dreamily.

Then they talked of the days to come.

"It isn't simply that we care," said Henry, watching the face beside him. "It is deeper than that. We want the same things, hope for the same things, pray for the same things. Our souls were made out of the same piece. I don't know what we may not do together, fighting side by side. The thought of you is armour and banner for me. You are just the visible expression of all that is holy."

"Fighting what?" asked the girl.

"Fighting many things, corrupt money for instance," he

answered. "There's your old trouble about your father's business. There is more insidious wrong mixed up with unfair shop-keeping than with anything else. Maybe he will let you help manage those establishments for him." Annice shook her head, but he did not see her. "I had no idea when I began how far this thing would lead me. I have no idea now where it may end. We will start out hand in hand, to see if we cannot find a place to work where the reward is fair, clean, honest money. I may have to take to digging potatoes."

"I can pick them up and cook them," said Annice. "We can live on potatoes and salt."

"Can you stand poverty?" he asked.

"Yes," whispered the girl.

No one came to call them, and they lingered with the flowers. They had no thought of their rudeness, and were utterly unconscious of the flight of time. One cannot tell eternity, and square it with the hours of the day. Twice Annice took her answer back. Twice she yielded again.

"I didn't want to be selfishly happy," she said, stopping and looking at Henry reproachfully. "I wanted to do something to lessen the sum of human suffering. I always meant to devote myself to some great need."

There was a shadow on her face. The grand-daughter of the Puritans was mourning the loss of pain out of her life, for the chief stimulus in the lives of generations of her foremothers was failing her now. Henry had grasped the motive-power in her nature, and he bowed his head in the dust, suing for her pity.

"No cause needs you as I need you," he said. "My life is wrecked if you cast me off. Look, I have nothing. I have taught wrong doctrine at Winthrop. My father is angry with me. My mother is dead. I have nobody but you."

"But that means happiness," said the girl, slowly. "I never knew about happiness, and it seems so wrong. I don't care." She turned toward him the face that in the

last few weeks had grown out of vague sympathy into passionate love. "I don't want to be a martyr. I don't want just to be good. I want you."

The setting sun was smiting the windows of the house. The lovers saw it with a start, and its last rays touched their foreheads as they turned to go in. Annice stopped in dismay.

"Oh, I forgot!" she cried. "I am a disgrace! My father says I have made my name a scandal by my masquerading. I can't disgrace you, too."

Henry looked down at her surrendered face. His happiness was beating in his ears like music too high for him to hear. He could not grasp it. It blotted out past and future. It was end and beginning of life for him.

"My name, too, is a scandal in Winthrop," he said gayly. "I am expecting every day to be denounced in the newspapers, and to be requested to leave the university. Look back," he added hastily.

The crimson flame of sunset was burning between the blue of the sky and the green of the trees. The gaunt branches of buttonwood and poplar touched it and yet were not consumed. Below stretched the garden, a mass of colour in the waning light.

"We are both outcasts," said Henry, "sent out of the Garden of Eden in disgrace to earn our bread by the sweat of our brows."

But the woman's face was shadowed with dim foreknowledge that the measure of their happiness was a promise of the measure of their pain.



CHAPTER XXII



JOY took up her abode in the great house at Gordon Heights. Through dark days and through fair the great rooms seemed flooded with sunshine. It was so strange, Annice kept saying to herself, to be there and to be happy. Every morning she rose with determination to confess to her father what she had done. Every day her sealed lips begged to keep their secret one day longer, and she followed her father about in silence, but with the look of one about to speak. Huge as the house was it could not contain her happiness; only the marshes and the sea could measure that. For hours, with the June wind in her hair, she watched the soft, silky, waving grass, half child of the water, half of the land, turning from its gray green and olive to watch the blue of the sea. It was all one to her whether the waves ran low or high. It was so sweet to know the way the great tides come!

Her long-delayed confession came just at the hour of all hours when it should not have come, on Mr. Gordon's return from a round of charity-visits in North Winthrop. Mr. Gordon had been on the alert in fulfilling his duties that spring. Always conscientious as manager, secretary, trustee of this and that organization, he added now to his conscientiousness, zeal. To all committee-meetings he

went with a punctuality as accurate as the movements of his expensive watch. The family reputation had suffered, and with him alone rested the task of retrieving all. That feeling of always standing alone for the right gave pathos to the lines about his mouth. He was widowed and practically daughterless. Annice had come back to him, but radiantly happy, and apparently unconscious of the confession of wrong-doing that she ought to make to him. To be sure, she had looked guiltily at him, and had been visibly embarrassed at surprising his glance. Perhaps she was on the verge of acknowledgment of all her sin: her open rebellion, her defiance, her threat in regard to earning her own daily bread. Meanwhile, in all his work, in the charity visiting in District B, in his long drives home by the sea, he yearned more than ever for the sympathy that eluded him. He meditated much on philanthropic schemes, and always, across his fair vision of possible good for the race, fell his own shadow. Unappreciated, misunderstood!

He was a fine sight as he explored North Winthrop, with a list of destitute families in his pocket. He had never before gone into this work very actively, having enrolled his name largely for the sake of example. Now no stone was to be left unturned in establishing the family respectability, and he was very active. Something clerical seemed to attach to his expression and to his black clothes. Something sophisticated and worldly gleamed in his shining silk hat. His benevolent hair and beard shed light in many an alleyway. Rude little street boys retreated before him, and dirty little girls, playing at housekeeping with old brooms, swept orange peel and banana skins out of his way. Mr. Gordon beamed down at them with approval. That was as it should be.

He turned into Salutation Street one day, leaving his carriage to wait round the corner while he made a single call. There was a new number in his list. A woman on the street had three weeks ago reported, at the central office of the charity organization, a case of two girls who

apparently needed help and were too proud to ask for it. The slow machinery had just moved round to consider the case. Mr. Gordon climbed three flights of stairs in the dark, and stood panting on the landing at the top. A feeble "Come" answered his knock. He entered the room with a feeling of unusual benignity. He felt himself responding to the call of suffering, and the sense of this expanded his heart, making him glow with charity — toward himself. All nature seemed beautiful to him in the light of his present act.

A sick woman lay on the bed in the little room. Her gray hair was parted over her wrinkled forehead, and her hands were folded. As Mr. Gordon entered, there was a flash of recognition in her deep-set eyes, but it met none from him. The emaciated woman before him bore little resemblance to the brown-handed girl whom he had often seen working the fields for her father years ago on the little farm.

"I beg your pardon," he remarked. "Is there anything I can do for you? I was told that somebody here needed help."

He hid his silk hat behind a chair, remembering, with unusual tact, that in the days of his clerkhood this article of apparel had been peculiarly embarrassing to him.

There was a long pause.

"No, I thank you," said the woman, slowly.

"Don't be afraid to ask," he said cordially, rubbing his hands together. "I am agent for a society whose object is to do good, and we like to do it. Wherever there is need, there it works. Its only requirement is assurance of merit, and that, I am sure, exists here."

He glanced at the clean patchwork quilt on the bed, then at the neatly arranged dishes on the what-not in the corner. The sight of an old blue china teapot startled him, though he did not recognize it. Subtly linked associations started working in his brain at the sight of that curving handle and the landscape on the side. He saw his mother's face,

and heard the click of her knitting-needles, saw her dead in the coffin, and felt again the glance of Jane Burns's angry eyes.

"Can't you think of something you would like?" he insisted, turning toward the face on the pillow. Those pale, gray, passionless eyes were fixed upon him with a look of high indifference that the gods might have envied.

"No," said the woman.

"Is there any need of hospital-treatment?" he asked.

She shook her head. Her silence irritated him. Always unappreciated! Even those, to whom one would do good, remained untouched.

"Wouldn't you like a few weeks in the country?" he asked coaxingly.

That last shaft was too much. The tears crept down the hollows in Jennie Burns's cheeks. He did not see them. His eyes were fixed on that tormenting blue teapot.

"It's too late to ask us if we wouldn't like to stay in the country, Samuel Gordon," said the sick woman.

He looked at her, helplessly, then he gazed around the room. No object gave him any clew to this mysterious situation, until, upon the wall, his eyes encountered the eyes of Jane Burns. Was that a real picture, or was it the old fancy in his mind? He did not know. Why did she follow him everywhere, he asked himself, fretfully, this cousin whom he had treated with perfect justice, and who had denounced him wrongfully? He turned from the picture to the woman on the bed, then back to the picture, and understood.

"You can't be Jennie?" he asked. There was something besides surprise in his voice, something almost like joy. He had never known the fate of that family, and it had worried him. Now he could still his conscience by doing them good.

"I don't wonder that you did not know me," said his niece. "I have changed, and God knows that I've had reason enough. Don't look afraid. I am not going to reproach you. You took my mother's birthright. The

farm went for debt and father and mother died. It used to madden me, but someway I don't mind now. I used to think it must be changed, for Mary's sake. I used to pray for justice, but that's all over. I think it must be all right somewhere, and I am sorriest for you."

Those faded eyes seemed to see into some world beyond the high silk hat and Prince Albert coat and the look of conscious rectitude on the philanthropist's face. Holy horror crept into that face now, and pity for this misguided woman. He met unflinchingly the look in Jennie Burns's eyes. It was not his idea of the judgment day, and he failed to recognize it.

"I am sorry for you," he said, "very sorry. It is an unspeakable grief to me that you should still preserve this delusion of your mother's. I never wronged her. What was right for me to do, I did then, as always. Your mother refused the aid I offered her. You refuse it now, and yet I repeat it. I will do all for you that is in my power. I will take you away from here and buy you a home. I will support you in it. Will you accept?"

He was paternal, and his manner would have graced the stage. He waited for the sick woman's answer.

"No," was all she said. Then all her old passionate feeling, crushed out and beaten down from day to day by the iron heel of fate, rose to one great outburst, and her bed shook with long-drawn sobs.

"I want my own," she cried, stretching her arms up to grasp the head of her bed, "my very own. I want my father and my mother, and my little girl with red cheeks. Father and mother are dead, and the little one is worn out as I am. You can't give them back to me, and I don't want anything you can give."

Mr. Gordon had risen, and he stood with his hand grasping the knob of the door. He gave his cousin a benedictory glance for farewell, and hurried down the stairs with haste that endangered his life. With unspeakable relief he stepped into his carriage, and started on his long drive

toward home. When he reached the outskirts of the city he lifted his hat to let the wind play on his forehead and through his gray hair. How all things conspired to mock him! Because of his steadfast purpose, people and things had always been leagued together to buffet and baffle him, yet even unto death would he persist in the right. The lingering suspicion of wrong in regard to the matter of the will had been set at rest by Jennie's accusation. There had been martyrs in the family before, and persecution from outside had always meant rectitude within. The hereditary psychology of the Gordon family was at work. He had done right in that matter. Jane Burns's attack had convinced him of that in the first place, only that was long past, and its force was somewhat spent. Even so, his conviction of the entire righteousness of Smith's had become fixed and immovable through Annice's attack upon it.

Far off, on the hilltop, he saw his great stone palace, and he lifted up his eyes to it in pride. It dominated nature, and ruled both sea and shore. The pale blue of the sea, the delicate green of the land, and the filmy clouds of this noon-day sky were only a background for it. That inherited sanctity of expression, which had covered a multitude of sins, deepened in the old man's face as he gazed. Truly the lines had fallen to him in pleasant places, and he had a goodly heritage. Truly, he had been singled out and chosen for special marks of the divine favour.

Annice was waiting for him on the verandah, leaning against a pillar, and looking very guilty in her great happiness. She tried to speak, and failed. Oh, she did love him, no one could ever tell how! but could she let her father know?

"Father," she said.

"My daughter!"

"I have something to tell you."

Mr. Gordon subdued the satisfaction on his face into an expression of pure forgiveness. The long-delayed confession of penitence was coming at last.

"I may have done wrong not to tell you before," said the girl, "only—" the flush that dyed her face and neck was emphasized by the white duck gown she wore—"only, I couldn't. And it wasn't my fault that it happened."

Mr. Gordon looked at her inquiringly.

"And it's not my place to tell you now," said the girl, stammering, "but I thought maybe it would be nicer to mention it before he comes—"

The father's face was a study. Was his daughter, indeed, as people said, insane?

"It's nothing," said Annice, "only, I've promised to marry Henry Worthington."

She was horribly ashamed, and sorry for her father. Really, her conduct had been outrageous. She wished that she had never come home; then, that she had never gone away in the first place. If her father could only have been warned in some way! Why did he stand there, staring at her like that? He could not be angry, or he would burst out into angry words. She would do anything in the world to make up for it, anything except giving Henry up. Last week she could have done even that, perhaps, but now, never. Turning her eyes toward the sea, she still felt the terror of her father's glance, and they stood there, her cheeks growing white as his grew red. What had she done? His face was like stone, and his eyes were like flame. She had been wicked, but she had not been so wicked as that.

"I presume you know," said Mr. Gordon, with unwonted self-control, "that that young man has insulted your father from a public platform. In a recent lecture at Winthrop University he took occasion to tell his students that I am a dishonourable man, that my money is not fit to touch, and that I am not fit to know. That may be what attracted you. It is quite in line with your own conduct."

He turned to go. The sunlight touched the old man's gray hair, and showed with pitiless clearness how deep his wrinkles were. The self-pity of the face became for the

moment almost like a halo. For his daughter, a rush of indignant pity swept away all the passion and the pleasure and the pain of the spring. It was shameful for a young man to be striking out against an old one, old, and her father! She sprang forward and kissed him.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry," she cried. "I did not know. I won't do it now, of course."

Mr. Gordon was deeply gratified. The wrath in his daughter's eyes was balm to his hurt. The working of her face he did not understand; he had never yet noticed that quiver in her chin, but he felt that at last the erring lamb had come home. He patted the girl's cheek with heavy fingers that hurt.

"There, there," he cried magnanimously. "It's all right."

Annice had a tiny note in her hand. It was the first love-letter she had ever written. She tore it up into little pieces. One of them the wind caught, and a scrap of paper bearing the word "Beloved," floated away over the sunlit marsh. Her mind was in a tumult like that of a tempestuous sea. She did care about her father. For the first time she knew that clearly. Pity for him, and a feeling of injury done herself, and that great love which demands that each act of the beloved shall be as lofty as one's thought of him, tore her heart in twain. She grasped all the remaining bits of her note close in her hot hand and went upstairs.

Miss Annice was not coming to luncheon, the maid said. She was not hungry, and she had something to do. For once, Mr. Gordon did not interfere. He ate his steak in thankfulness, and retired to his own room to take a nap. He was dreaming that he had founded a home for aged women, when he was roused by a knock. The maid entered, holding out an unsealed letter, and saying that Miss Annice said he was to read it and to see if it was all right. Mr. Gordon sat up in haste. One cheek was very red and his hair was tumbled.

"Dear Mr. Worthington," said the letter, written with unusually black marks on the heavy cream-coloured note-paper; "you will hardly expect me, after hearing of your lecture, to consider myself in any way bound to you. It perhaps has not occurred to you that my father's destiny and mine are rather closely connected. I will not reproach you; I will merely say good-bye.

"Sincerely yours,

"ANNICE GORDON."

Mr. Gordon nodded approvingly.

"It's all right," he said, and he lay down again on the lounge. The cool horsehair soothed his warm cheek. He loved this lounge. It was the image of one that had stood in the old parlour at home when he was a boy. He used to sit on it when the minister came, and that minister had always had prayers. Mr. Gordon could remember sliding slowly down it as the clergyman had read from Leviticus. He was going to sleep again, glad that this matter was settled. Annice was a more dutiful child than he had imagined.

The maid took the letter back to her mistress. Annice sat looking down upon it, white with an anger almost as intense as her love; then she put on a sailor hat and started to take it to the post-office herself, not wishing to trust it to anybody else. She went slowly down the gravelled driveway and along the village street to the tiny office where Mr. Gordon had a box side by side with that of Mike McGoon, the cabbage-raiser. Then she turned and walked swiftly toward the sea.

The motion in the warm air brought colour to her cheeks. Moisture gathered on her forehead as she pushed on. Yonder were the rocks! Picking her way over the shingle, she rounded a corner of cliff and came out by the water. It was low tide. Far out the pale blue water was retreating from the yellow sand. Near, great stones, covered with dank mud, lay simmering in the sun. There

was no life, no motion anywhere. Annice climbed to a shelf among the rocks, a shady spot where she had passed many hours, years ago, then she shut her eyes, and leaned back her head like a tired child. The hands that lay powerless in her lap were full of pathetic weariness. Her face was all pain.

A little sandpiper crept near, below on the sand. Gulls flew overhead, and song-sparrows came to linger among the wild rose-bushes that grew higher on the cliff. Hour after hour passed. Annice did not open her eyes, and yet she was not asleep. She was listening to the murmurs of the sea. It was always to be for her henceforth, she said to herself, like this desolate beach, with its far-retreating water. After hopelessness and desolation, life and the joy of life had been hers, and she had thrown them away.

"I did not want to let him go," she moaned to herself, "I loved him so." Her hands were clasped so firmly together that the clasp was pain. How he had helped her! For the firm guidance of that strong young hand she had put everything at his feet — all her love, all her devotion, and he had said things like that about her father, *hers!* She thought how she had waived her scruples about duty, and had given her conscience into his keeping.

"I trusted him," she murmured, "and he has done this thing."

Why had he done it? What had he been trying to prove? A personal attack could hardly help his work of reform. The exaggerated words her father had used came back to her, "A dishonest man, not fit to know." In the midst of it all Henry's face appeared, as clearly as if he were standing before her: the honest gray eyes, the sensitive mouth, the beautiful forehead, the air of good-breeding. She started up with wide-opened eyes.

"He never did it," she said indignantly. "They told my father wrong. He never could have done a thing like that."

She curled back into the rock again, a little heap of misery. It was all over. Written words could not be unwritten, and her accusation of Henry was in his hands by this time. She had promised him a letter for to-day, and that she had torn up. His was still in her pocket, and she took it out, holding it between her hot fingers. It was not hers any longer, she told herself, but the touch of it was sweet. Yes, it was all over, and it was well for Henry that he had escaped. A woman who, even for three hours, had believed a report like that was not fit to be his wife. The great simplicity and the great nobleness of that nature deserved something worthier than she could ever be.

The tide had begun to turn. There was a breeze over the water, and a little stir of wakening life rippled down the sand. The thirsty marsh-grass waited for the water to come back. The girl sat on the rocks and watched it all with eyes from which the new hope had faded. Shadows grew longer as the sun sank in the west, and long shafts of light turned to gold the curling edges of the little waves. The higher rocks were covered now, as the tide came throbbing in. Annice could hear the beat of the water in the marshes, where the long grasses quivered as the water washed through them again. There was a thrill along the sand and through the marshes.



CHAPTER XXIII



T was Commencement Day. The city was warm with June sunshine and sweet with the odour of freshly mown grass. The commencement guests in their gay clothing, walking in the shadow of the trees and past the close-clipped lawns, were as gay as a group of Boccaccio's men and women on the hills of Fiesole.

This great day of the year was full of excitement in Winthrop. In the afternoon came the solemn chapel-exercises. Trustees and faculty, assembling on the campus, marched in line to the chapel platform. Behind them filed the seniors in cap and gown, to sit through the Latin oration and the commencement address, facing the rows of gray heads upon the platform. The veteran sons of the university, grouped on the left, looked on and listened. For all, faculty, trustees, alumni, students, throughout the old worn ceremony rang the watchwords of a common hope.

Henry and his father stood in the library at home, ready, in cap and gown, for the afternoon. Professor Worthington's face was full of light. The blow he had dreaded had not come. Henry had received no official censure, and the father was happy. This was his day of triumph. The time had come for his son to sit in state with him upon

the chapel platform upon Commencement Day. He looked at his son, then at his wife's writing-desk, then at Henry again, and was silent.

That Henry was troubled Worthington was well aware. He had seen him last night, before the gas was lighted, contract his forehead over his tightly shut eyes and clench his hands, as if in pain. He noticed that Henry was only half conscious of what was going on. Whether it was penitence for his rash course, or apprehension in regard to the future, or misunderstanding with Miss Gordon, the professor did not know. He wished that he did. But Henry gave him no clew. Of that cruel little letter in his pocket there was no outward or visible sign. He wore it as a man wears a dagger in his breast. Henry straightened now his father's cap, and arranged the tassel on the proper side. He suggested a few minutes on the verandah for a breath of fresh air before they started.

"It will be abominably hot in the chapel," said Henry. They were walking up and down side by side when the postman met them.

"It's a letter that came last night," he said, smiling apologetically. "It got caught in the bag and was overlooked. Hope it's nothing serious, sir?"

Henry was reading the letter with an unmoved face. He handed it to his father without a word.

The secretary of the Board of Trustees had written with regret to Associate Professor Henry Worthington to say that at a meeting of the Board on June first, it had been considered necessary to examine into his teaching of economic doctrine at Winthrop. It had been found that he had uttered in his class-room opinions running counter to the established order of things—opinions, socialistic in tendency, and dangerous to young men. The possible consequences of such teaching were foreseen by the trustees to be so serious that they were unanimous, with one exception, in recommending Associate Professor Worthington's resignation.

Alfred Worthington's face turned white, but Henry drew a sigh of deep relief.

"I am sorry for you," said the boy. There was no shame in his face. It showed deeper lines now about the mouth than it had worn in early winter. The strain of teaching, the pain of decision, the hurt of the last few days had left traces there. He turned to enter the house, then faced his father, grasping the older man's hand.

"I don't mind the disgrace, for myself, a bit," he said, "but I can't stand vexing you. Of course, I can't go with you to-day. Father," he added desperately, "don't you see that I couldn't do anything else?"

Alfred Worthington's eyes were resting on the hemlock tree. Tall and straight it stood against the intense blue sky. The look on his face as he turned toward Henry, satisfied the boy. Henry went back to the library. The professor walked alone down the street.

"Where's Henry?" asked Professor Penrose, as Worthington took his place among his colleagues on the campus. They stood in groups, looking, in their black academic garb, like an assembly of great crows in a young corn-field. But Penrose did not wait for an answer, and he stopped the next person who started to ask Worthington that question. Another man — it was Professor Bellingham — succeeded in making this inquiry of Worthington. He found himself sharply nudged in the ribs.

"Hold your tongue," said a voice in his ear, and he was aware of the presence of Benedict Warren, who, for the first time in his life, had come to take his place among the trustees upon the commencement platform.

In the chapel the organ began playing the Pilgrim Chorus from *Tannhäuser*, and the procession started, and moved on, in its mediæval garb, a solemn shadow across the grass. Two by two they filed to the platform, silver hair against the black. Gordon was there, looking important; Professor Bellingham was merely sleepy. An unwonted expression of definite content had replaced, for the

time being, the wandering glance of Penrose's race. He had an unwonted sense of belonging to it all, this world of faces old and young, and of solemn organ music. Warren was supremely uncomfortable, but he managed during the opening prayer to think out a new dodge for the flies he used as bait. Worthington glanced around the platform and realized that all his colleagues in the university, all the business men who represented the city he loved, knew of his son's disgrace, or would know of it to-morrow. He looked, too, about the crowded chapel, where bright gowns blazed against the sombre black of the men's garments, and realized the whole.

But he realized it with a curious sense of indifference. The family traditions were dishonoured; the blow had fallen; but the professor was conscious only of a cessation of the pain of the last few months. The opening address by the president was begun, but Worthington heard only broken bits of this stately Latin oration. He was listening, though he did not know it, listening in that old fashion for the boy's footstep. The soft tiptoeing of the ushers startled him. That footfall of Henry—he could always tell it among a hundred; every step seemed to fall upon his heart. He knew that the boy was at home to-day. Whence was this irresistible conviction that he was coming nearer and nearer?

There was a pause. The Latin speech was over. The orator of the day had half risen for his introduction when the president stepped forward saying that he had an announcement to make. As they had doubtless learned from the newspapers, through the munificence of their honoured colleague, Mr. Samuel Gordon, five hundred thousand dollars had, early in the year, been added to the working funds of one of the scientific departments. It seemed fitting that, on this day, special mention should be made of this generous gift, and that the sons of the university, and her friends from outside, should know that the application of these funds to the needs of the department in question

had already been begun. A ripple of applause started, was hushed, because of the sacredness of the place, thundered forth and resounded again and again against the rafters, Gordon's white beard gleamed benevolence. Appreciation was his at last! Curious eyes looked at Worthington; even the president's eyelids twitched as he glanced that way. But Alfred Worthington did not move a muscle. He heard, but he did not heed. The Gordon gift was nothing to him now. He was thinking about Henry, and had bowed his head upon his hand, ashamed of his softening mood. The feeling of irritation in the boy's having convictions not his own, had vanished. That sense of separation caused by the intrusion of a girl's face between them was gone. Even his censure of Henry's discourtesy to a fellow-man disappeared, replaced by a deep satisfaction in sharing his child's disgrace. *His, his, his*, banded together even by this shame against all the world. Something possessed the father entirely, a love without impatience, love that would suffer long and be kind. Strong as the tide of a great ocean, it carried him out toward the eternal.

A ray of June sunshine, falling through stained glass, made halos round half a dozen heads. It touched Worthington's, bowed slightly, as he said to himself that he was not fit to be the minister of a love so great. For he touched in it the perfectness that comes through suffering. In the peace of the larger moment he was glad of all the pain.

Then he was conscious of one thing, one thing only, a sharp apprehension. The air grew chilly with a sudden fear. Henry must go away; he must seek work elsewhere, and live henceforth beyond his father's touch. The hurt of that thought to the gray-haired man no one could know. Throughout the rest of the exercises this dread held him in a kind of dream. Suddenly he became aware that the Seniors had risen. One by one they advanced to the president, who bent, gave each his diploma, repeat-

ing, the old Latin formula, beginning with the words: "Auctoritate commissa mihi —." It was the passing on of the torch from old hands to the young. Worthington's eyes were pitiful. One after another they stepped onward. Each one to him was Henry. Each face in that procession was to him a new good-bye.

He tried to avoid Warren's glance, which was anxiously fixed upon him. He wanted to escape, even from his friend. When the grave assembly broke up, Professor Worthington passed through the crowd, avoiding the sympathetic glances that were cast toward him, and disappeared. He wanted only his work. That had never failed him yet. He hurried to his laboratory and mounted the stairs. The sight of the familiar apparatus, the long desks, his microscope, his boxes of slides, soothed him. The silence was good. He laid down his hat, put under the microscope a specimen he had prepared yesterday, and sat down to look at it, with a sudden sense of escape.

Outside on the campus was a hum and roar of words. The dignified excitement of Winthrop's Commencement Day had never extended to confusion like this. Groups of ladies chattered with the sound of many voices. Trustees of Winthrop talked in twos and threes, gravely shaking their heads. Swarms of undergraduates gathered and dispersed, listening to one another, or pausing to hear some self-elected orator who held the attention of the circle near him for a minute or two. The guests of the occasion suffered a feeling of neglect. The attention of their hosts seemed to be centred elsewhere.

"It's as bad as Russian despotism," said little Allan Hayes, fiercely, his hands in his pockets, his shoulders held sternly back. "They'll be sending everybody who dares speak his mind off to Siberia presently." He glared at the trustees. "Worthington hasn't his equal as a man and a scholar in the whole university," he added.

"Might as well have the Star Chamber back again, every bit!" observed a newly made alumnus, who still

grasped in his hand his roll of sheepskin. "The freedom of the press, and the French Revolution, and the Declaration of Independence haven't counted at all. Let's go back to the Middle Ages and wear metal collars round our necks, and have chains attached to them so the trustees can lead us around."

The news of Henry Worthington's deposition travelled fast. The wife of a trustee had confided it to a friend during the chapel exercises. The faculty soon knew it. It spread through the ranks of the alumni. The undergraduates took it up. To them, it savoured of tyranny, and their sympathy turned all toward its victim. Young Worthington was a favourite. He played base-ball. He had treated his students as if there were no yawning gulf of ignorance fixed between him and them, and had actually confessed in his class-room that there were many things he did not know. Even those who had no personal acquaintance with the young professor had caught that contagious enthusiasm which spreads so readily through the ranks of the young. Now, a crowd of students gathered near one of the chapter houses and sang lustily an improvised song:—

"If you've got an idee
Don't tell a trustee.
He'll bounce you, you see,
If you've got an idee —"

Warren was trying to find his friend. He grumbled a little when his quest proved vain. Sitting on a chapel platform for two hours had made him a moral wreck. He had come with a notion of protecting Worthington, just how he did not know. A man who was willing to give up smoking a whole afternoon for a purpose like that ought to be allowed to carry it out. He sniffed about the campus like a dog on the scent, but to no purpose. He heard a group of ladies talking about Henry.

"Such bad taste," said one. "So hard for his father," said another.

Warren gnawed his under-lip.

Near the founder's statue stood Gordon. All his friends had rallied round him, and they were talking of the munificence of the gift. Gordon looked satisfied and complacent, wearing an expression not unlike that of an idol with its set bronze smile. His reward had come at last. The submission of his daughter, the applause of his fellow-townsmen, were his. Warren looked about him and cursed them all. Commencement was only an infernal row, arranged for the purpose of making people, notably Alfred Worthington, uncomfortable. And all these men and women standing about in the way seemed to exist only for the purpose of maltreating his friend.

Warren went home. So, at last, did everybody else. Girls in light gowns, with faded roses, followed their mothers away. The students collected for the last meal at the commons. Penrose conducted his sister politely down Wiclif Street to St. Paul.

Mrs. Appleton was moved. Commencement always appealed to her. It linked the present with the past. It was the one moment of emotion in the long gray academic year. Old memories clustered round it—and her new gown fitted well.

"Poor Henry," she said sympathetically. "I am so sorry for him. He meant well, but it was such a blunder. Can't those trustees take his youth into account?"

"We can't afford to pity people whose principles are stronger than our own," said Penrose. His voice had an unnatural sound.

"Virgil!" exclaimed Mrs. Appleton.

"The boy was right," said Penrose, firmly.

Astonishment robbed Mrs. Appleton of both the "retort courteous" and the "quip modest." If there was a touch of the "counter-check quarrelsome" in her next remark, there was yet more human sympathy of a fine practical order.

"Virgil," she said, "we've done nothing permanent for

those Burns sisters. I've been thinking about it all the afternoon. As you have taken no action, I am going to buy back that miserable farm, and rent it to them for nothing."

It was Penrose's minute of triumph. They had been rare in his life with Juliette.

"I have already done so," he answered, looking at her with his calm brown eyes.

Even Worthington went home at last, but not until he had been summoned by Henry. It grew dark. Henry walked impatiently up and down Wiclif Street under the flickering brightness and shadow of electric lights. Groups of revellers passed him. Strains of music floated from the gymnasium, for people were dancing there. He grew uneasy. Walking down to the laboratory he saw, in his father's window, the light of the gas falling on the gray head and quick hands. It was all right. The boy went leaping up the stairs and burst into the room. It was not a tragic face that greeted him. Worthington was standing at a sink, a towel tied round his waist, in guise of an apron, washing slides in soap and water.

"Why, I had forgotten all about supper!" said the father.

They cooked their evening meal on the library table, in a chafing dish. For months they had not been so merry. The shadow of the past had faded away. The professor told his son how Bellingham had gone to sleep during the oration. Henry told his father that Warren had been at the house looking for him.

"He won't speak to me," said Henry, with a laugh. To both it seemed an excellent joke.

The excitement died out in Winthrop. Everybody went away to the mountains or to the sea. The trustees proceeded with their business, or their leisure, as the case might be, one occasionally deigning to explain at the club, his feet on the nearest chair, just why it was that the teacher of a dangerous heresy had been expelled from their

academic walls. A new candidate was found for the position, and the trouble was over.

Henry and his father stayed on in Lancaster Place. The sympathizing friends who called found it hard to sympathize, for the father was unusually happy, and the son concealed the misery in his heart. The two men, in their lonely life, resumed their old habits, working half the day, for Alfred Worthington's zeal for science had come back to him with added strength. In the late afternoons they walked by the water, and past the long stretches of waving grass in the marshes. In the evening they sat on the verandah with their chairs tipped back, revelling in each other's silence. Perhaps because the daily routine of term work was over, time seemed to have stopped, and the long, cloudless summer days to have launched them into eternity.

Night after night Henry lived over the story of his brief life with Annice, said the old words again, touched her gown once more. He formed some bitter, abstract views, the first he had ever had, about women. The fancied wavering of the girl's love for him revealed to him for the first time the beauty of his father's devotion. "Passing the love of women," murmured Henry, one evening, as he watched his father in the twilight on the verandah. For the young man the old affection, half forgotten and obscured through the winter, came sweeping back with tenfold strength, a great flood-tide. The early passive acceptance was gone; he yearned to take his father's burdens on his strong shoulders and carry them for him.

"Do you think I'm going to the far West to leave you here?" demanded the boy one night, when he found his father writing some letters of inquiry in regard to a new position for the son. "Not I. I'll break stone for the roads in Winthrop first. Why, you can't begin to take care of yourself."

Even the mystery of Henry's love-story no longer formed a veil between them. The young man started awkwardly one night to explain the situation to his father.

"Don't," said Alfred Worthington, putting his hand on Henry's knee. "Can't you see that I understand?"

"It was that lecture that made a mess of it," said Henry. "It is all over. I only wanted you to know."

"Wait," said the professor, after a long silence.

Alfred Worthington was working hard, too hard. He had never been so deeply content in his life. There was unlimited leisure, now, for that unsolved problem. One afternoon he climbed swiftly up the laboratory stairs to that long, hot room, and sat down at his microscope, leaning back in his chair for a minute before beginning to work.

He went back in thought to his youth. The vague glory of those early ambitions had been narrowed down to this! He touched his instrument lovingly, and smiled. Content to know, if he could find it out, this infinitesimal thing—he who, at twenty-five, had stormed the heights of science, determined to know all! An uneasy feeling came to him. He was afraid that not enough time would be left him to find out. He thought of his mistakes, his wasted time, and he envied Henry his youth. He was young and strong, with the road all before him, and the light of the east on his forehead still. Alfred Worthington felt way-worn and weary, in the memory of old blunders and defeats. Henry's present problem touched him, and left him untroubled. If all this meant larger life for the boy, he could be glad of the separation and the pain. He could not understand, but that brave, boyish soul, forcing its way along difficulties—he could trust it beyond his reach. There was a photograph of Henry on his desk, Henry at twenty, the head slightly thrown back, and in the eyes the look of one who enters upon a race. The professor looked at it and smiled, his heart full of the peace of letting go.

He turned to his work. It was intolerably hot. Perspiration was running down his forehead. Meditating on his problem, suddenly he thought he saw a new solution and he jumped, excited, to his feet, grasped a book, and sank

back again. The old treacherous heart-action had betrayed him at last.

It was Warren who found him there. Warren had come to spend the evening in Lancaster Place, knowing that Henry was away. It was half-past seven. His host was not yet home. Alarmed, he hastened to the laboratory.

"Nobody there, sir," said the janitor.

"Let me in. I'm a trustee," said Warren, angrily.

He climbed the stairs in the darkness. They creaked disagreeably. He did not like strange places, and he did not like the dark, but he pushed open his friend's door.

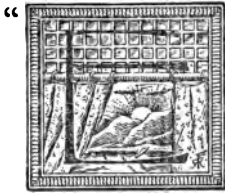
"What are you doing here at this time of night?" he asked, looking at the familiar figure in the chair.

The answering silence alarmed him.

He walked over, touched Worthington's shoulder, and looked down. God was merciful to Benedict Warren. It was the first time he had seen death, and death wore the face he loved best.



CHAPTER XXIV



“AT your breakfast,” commanded Warren, sternly.

Henry looked at him with beseeching eyes.

“I believe I have a cold,” he remarked in apology. “I’ll eat my breakfast to-morrow.”

Warren sat at Henry’s left and poured the coffee. Opposite stood the professor’s empty chair. The air was close and heavy in the darkened room, for these July days were days of burning heat. Henry stirred his coffee, and eyed his spoon; then he broke a roll and left the piece lying on his plate. His face, pale in the wan light, was like the face of a man who has lived, unwillingly, through long illness. He excused himself as soon as possible and went into the library.

Warren looked after him, shaking his head. Henry’s step dragged, and his shoulders drooped, as if he were old. It was a sad transformation of the youth who, two months before, had walked with head erect, an indescribable air of health and joyousness and energy about him. Warren thrust his hands into his pockets and shrank into his chair, resting his chin upon his bosom. This sudden paternity was puzzling. How to wear the cloak of responsibility that had fallen upon him the night of his old friend’s death

—this had been the burden of Warren's thoughts through all the intervening days. The feeling of duty had crowded out everything else, fighting with grief for the possession of his soul.

Practically he had taken up his abode in Lancaster Place. He did not sleep there, but early in the morning nearly every day he appeared, demanding his breakfast. Sometimes he turned up at luncheon, invariably at dinner. The taking of three regular meals a day, after so many years of desultory domestic life, threatened to destroy his excellent health.

He realized Henry's existence now. On that June night when it had been his task to tell the boy of his father's death, he saw for the first time with distinctness that Henry was no longer a child. An unjust feeling that that sudden death was all Henry's fault had lurked in Warren's bosom ever since that moment of discovery. He fought the notion. The doctor had said that unusual physical exertion in the heat was the sole cause of the collapse. He had been expecting it for years, he added, and was surprised that it had not come sooner. He laughed at Warren's hint that mental disturbance had aided the disease. In Warren's mind the ugly thought was still insistent. That lay at the root of his increasing kindness to the boy. He was trying to stamp out that suspicion, and struggle was new to Benedict Warren.

Fierce jealousy had flashed into Henry's face when the news had been brought him. To his dying day, Warren would not forget that look. Why, Henry asked himself, had God allowed some one to stand at that moment between his father and himself? His eyes should have been the first to see. It was Warren's season of triumph, though his hawk-like eyes had softened with pity for the son. Even in his extreme grief he could not help being glad that the last service had been his.

"I've known Alfred longer than that boy has," he said to himself.

Warren had tried to be father and mother to Henry ever since. He had assumed command of the house, for its young master was stupefied by grief, and incapable even of realizing what was going on. Warren drew a deep sigh and thrust his hands farther into his pockets. Here he was with that boy on his hands. What could he do? The old clock in the corner ticked away an hour and a half while the foster-father sat and meditated.

Presently he rose and sauntered out of the house, down the walk, and away to his own home. Half an hour later he was walking, clad in his old brown fishing-suit and carrying a rod over his shoulder, out toward Winthrop Heights. He was not going fishing. The costume had been assumed to give him presence of mind, for he was never so completely himself as when wearing this grotesque toggery.

Any other man would have taken a car. Benedict Warren walked. Any other man would have suffered from the heat. Warren gloried in it. He could feel it in his thin wrists and ankles. He could feel it on his moist forehead. There was no breeze in the hot July air. Beyond the marshes the sea lay, calm as the sky, and more intensely blue. All round, the hay stood piled in stacks, row upon row, of refreshing green. Here and there a great black crow stood upon the hay, panting, open-beaked in the heat. Warren strode on past the meadows to the driveway, a dark silhouette against the blue of the water and the green of the land. He was hurrying to set right a world out of joint.

He passed the lodge of the Gordon estate and climbed the hill. The great house was quiet, shaded by huge awnings that tried to take the place of trees. Annice was in her hammock on the verandah, a slender white figure swaying in a gossamer web. She rose when she saw the approaching guest and gave him her hand. She knew him. Everybody knew Benedict Warren.

"Father away?" asked the visitor.

"Yes," said the girl, smiling. "Won't you sit down and talk to me? I'll have Ann bring you some lemonade."

"Don't want it," said Warren. "It's nasty stuff."

He refused the offered chair and sat down on the steps. His fingers sought his pocket for his much-loved pipe, but he resolutely drew them away from the temptation. Few had suspected him of the weakness, but nevertheless, Warren had certain notions of his own regarding manners. He was eying Annice sharply. The slight hollows of cheek and temple and the deep sadness of her eyes did not escape him.

"It's of no consequence," he said. "I was out fishing." He reddened a little under the keen glance of the girl's eyes, he, who had not blushed for forty years! "I thought maybe you could give me a few matches to light my pipe."

"With pleasure," said Annice, laughing. She brought them to him herself. Warren watched her as she went back to take her seat in the hammock. Almost he could understand about Henry. To be sure, anything like that would be in the way, and yet, the clear face with its shining eyes, and the smooth hair curving on the forehead brought back a feeling he half remembered from his own youth. Those fluttering white draperies—surely somewhere he had seen the like. He was not so puzzled about it all as he had been on the way out. He would begin. The stern jaw quivered twice.

"Fine weather we're having," he observed, with great effort.

"Very," said Annice. "Have you caught any fish?" There was mischief as well as pathos in her eyes. Warren was uneasy. Was she going to find him out?

"Not yet," he said. "It's the first day I've been out in some time. Don't seem to have any luck. Maybe I've got my hand out. I've been staying—" he hesitated, then tried again—"with Worthington's son. You don't know him, I believe."

"A little," said Annice. She caught her breath as she spoke and looked away.

"He's had a hard blow," said Warren, taking off his hat and mopping his forehead. This talking about other people's feelings was as bad as talking about one's own! "He's a fine boy," added the schemer, "though not equal to his father. Never will be that," he insisted, with sudden treachery. "But he's a good lad. Worthington's son could hardly be less than that."

"I have no doubt of it," said Annice, quietly. She was very pale, and was looking steadily toward the sea.

"I presume he will leave Winthrop presently." Warren almost groaned as he jerked out the remark. This was a strange girl, who could not take the initiative even to the extent of asking an intelligent question! "Very likely he will go to some Western college. He has to leave Winthrop, you know. It was unfortunate, and hard on his father. But I presume he'll accept some call if he's well enough to go."

The bird-like eyes were watching the girl very intently.

"Is he ill?" demanded Annice, turning swiftly toward him.

"Going to be, I'm afraid," said Warren, nodding with an expression of deep satisfaction that seemed brutal under the circumstances. "Can't eat. Can't sleep. Seems to be troubled about something. Shouldn't wonder if he'd go into melancholia. I presume," the cords stood out in Benedict Warren's throat, and the corners of his mouth twitched, "I presume he feels responsible for the shock to his father, feels as if he'd killed him. It was heart-disease, you know."

"Oh," cried the girl. "That's horrible." Her face was drawn with pain. She had risen and was looking at Warren with eyes that shone through tears. "Couldn't you tell him that he didn't?"

Warren crossed his legs, restless and uneasy. He was succeeding beyond his expectations, but success is embarrassing to a modest man.

"Of course that is all nonsense," he said. "The doctor

says so. It was walking too far that did it. Just physical." He looked at Annice as if he expected her to question this, and his voice was very emphatic. "The doctor has told Henry this over and over, but he is unreasonable. I've been afraid he'd make way with himself. He spends half his time in the cemetery, moping. I s'pose being asked to resign has cut him up."

"He was right to do and say what he did," said Annice, firmly. "Don't you think he ought to have done it, no matter what the cost was?"

"No," said Warren, sharply, "I don't. It was a fuss about nothing. He ought to have held his tongue and done his work as his father did before him. Just the same, I've got the boy on my hands, now that he has made a mess of things. He's going to kill himself before he gets done. Apparently he hasn't got anybody in the world to tend him. I must be going."

He pulled himself into a standing position, the motions of his long, thin frame irresistibly suggesting a jumping-jack moved by strings. Then he shouldered his fishing-rod and sauntered down the hill. He left Annice standing on the verandah, looking after him with piteous eyes. Wandering near the shore, he sank down under a tree, exhausted. It was the hardest day's work of his life. Then he went to sleep with his dog watching over him, and he dreamed, in the hot summer sunshine, that he and Alfred were boys again. They were climbing Long Meadow Hill, and the air was warm. Half waking, he thought of his future, the lonely life in his old house where Alfred Worthington's footsteps would not sound again, and his heart cried out to the rocks and the trees for his friend.

It was observed by those who knew Benedict Warren in after years, that he never, after Worthington's death, seemed to have any more wise opinions about the foolishness of belief in an after life.

Upon the verandah Annice swung to and fro in her hammock. The sunshine hurt her, and the beauty of grass

and sky was keen pain. She had deserted in his hour of supreme trial the soul that needed her most. She had betrayed a great trust. Annice buried her face in her arms and lay quite still, while memory, like an angel of judgment, led her back through the path she had trodden with Henry. He had loved her as no woman had ever yet been loved — and she? She had thought only of herself. Because he was clear-sighted and strong she had trusted him to guide her from her labyrinth. She had kept his memory with her in secret through the days and nights of the winter. Then he had stormed her heart and taken it, and she had yielded — for what?

The girl's arms quivered a little under her hidden face. It was for his help, his guidance in difficulty. Never thinking of what she could give, but always of what she could get, she had been guilty of spiritual selfishness, of a mercenary love that had calculated the profit to her own soul. Henry was nobler than she, how much nobler she had never known till now. As she lay with blinded eyes there came to her a passionate perception of love greater than she had felt, love that gave and asked nothing, surrendering itself wholly to the beloved.

The vistas of her lost Eden opened before her. She sat up, rigidly erect, with strands of disordered hair floating about her cheeks, and the print of the rough mesh of the hammock on her forehead. The look on her face was one for which a man might well wait half a lifetime. Oh, she did love him, with a love that was beginning and end of life. Through all this terrible summer the very winds of heaven had fought for him; the sunshine had been his touch. But for her own weakness it might have been hers to hold that beloved head close, close to her bosom, letting her kisses fall upon the eyelids, shielding it from disgrace.

* * * * *

"I did mean it then, indeed I did," said Annice to her father that afternoon. "But I have had a long time to think it over, and I see that I was hasty and wrong."

"Wrong?" demanded Mr. Gordon, looking up from his newspaper with a scowl.

"Yes," said Annice, simply. "I know he never said that thing, and I love him. I am going —"

"You are going to ask him to take you back?"

"I am," answered the girl.

"Now that he has insulted your father and disgraced himself, so that he hasn't a chance to earn a penny —"

"He has the more need of me," said Annice, softly.

There may be excuse for the exasperation of Mr. Gordon, who saw in his daughter's changes of mind only a woman's wavering will, instead of a love as great as the love that had called to her through Henry from the depths of things. The old man's anger broke into self-pity.

"You care about everything except your father," he muttered.

"I do care, I care more than I ever did," pleaded the girl. "I am just beginning to find out. I want to take care of you always; only, my life belongs to Henry."

Mr. Gordon sat like a figure carved in stone. It had always been like this! One brief day of appreciation had been his in a lifetime of under-estimation. In the long silence the girl's heart beat with foreboding. Mr. Gordon looked up at his daughter at last. In anger he was seldom so calm.

"You must take your choice between that young man and me. If you marry him you shall not have a cent of my money."

The unexpected solution of the old problem regarding money brought relief to the girl. She stood silent, waiting.

"Make up your mind," commanded her father. His rigid lips did not quiver.

"It is made up," said Annice, sadly, as she moved slowly toward the door. "I think I had better go back to Mrs. Appleton. Good-bye."

There was no answer.

"Father," came a voice from the doorway, quite a long

time after. "I will come back whenever you need me, if you want me to come."

Mr. Gordon did not turn his head. There was no relenting in the wistful face in the doorway. Six months ago that face had been all a question. It was an answer now.

It had been an unspeakable relief to Henry that morning to see Warren go away. He realized the efforts that his father's friend was making to be good to his father's son, but Warren knew too much, was too near the sacred circle to be welcome now. That lean figure had become to the boy the embodiment of his own remorse. To have this spectre, a visible reminder of his guilt toward his dead father, following him even to his own table, was agony beyond his power of endurance.

Endurance was all that was left. Of the past as of the future Henry did not dare think. The days that had passed had been days of self-accusation, broken by simple, unreflective grief. Henry spent as many hours as possible with his books, some in walking, the rest in trying to sleep. But in sleep there was no rest. Night after night his dreams were full of the old debate with his father. He could see so clearly every wrinkle in his father's face! Sleeping, Henry argued both sides of the question, and woke, now thinking that he was his father, now realizing his own personality. In either case, waking brought that helpless feeling of being unable to convince his opponent that he was right.

Go in whatever direction he would when he left the house, his feet always carried him to the cemetery. Behind its high walls was shelter. From the real or the fancied unfriendliness of people about him he took refuge among the friendly graves. The dead forgive always; and what is the earth anywhere but the dust of the merciful dead? In the years before he had seldom entered the place. He had known it chiefly from the look it always brought to his father's face. Now he had learned it by

heart. He had spelled out a score of old inscriptions, almost effaced by time. He had studied the row of moss-green stones, removed from their original resting-places, and standing in a row by the southern wall. Two spots only he avoided. One was the place where his father lay buried. The other was the lot where a huge granite monument stood, bearing the name "Gordon." One side bore the inscription, "Ellen, beloved wife of Samuel Gordon, in the 46th year of her age." Henry had come upon this suddenly one day, and had retreated.

To-day he started seaward as was his wont, but the air was hot. He turned back and found himself nearing, by roundabout paths, the place he had determined not to approach. The pale green moss stealing across the rough stones of the great wall seemed almost like an expression of pity in hard things. The tall evergreens were solemn against the blue above that line of stone. Henry entered through the arched gateway with a sigh of relief, as of one who lays his burdens down.

He passed the old sun-dial that had told time — or eternity — for many years. A group of children were playing near it, busy with the old work of imitation. They were laying out toy-cemeteries on a flattened grave, using sticks and small oblong stones for the purpose. He passed them, wandering aimlessly through the quiet paths. Farther on, a group of workmen, sitting on the flat gravestones, were eating bread and butter for their noonday luncheon. Their tin pails rested beside them. Their blue blouses made a vivid spot of colour in the encompassing green. Henry walked on, listening to the chimes that told the hours from the great tower of the city-hall near by, and smiling at the great care taken to count the passing of time, here, where time was not.

The afternoon shadows had begun to steal along the grass when he found himself drawn by strong impulse toward the forbidden spot. Before he was aware he was standing by his father's grave. He sat down on the grass

close by it, and the past of which he had tried not to think rushed upon him in an agony of grief. Oh, it was all his fault! He had been the cause of his father's death. Throughout the winter he had forgotten that father's little needs, the book he had wanted in the evening, the paper he had asked the son to bring from down town. To the penitent at this moment this slight neglect seemed graver than his greater sin. He stretched out his hand and touched the broken sod over the grave. It was the very gesture with which his father used to reach out to touch his son's shoulder. Henry flung himself upon the ground, clasping with both hands the warm earth above his father's dust.

Oh, the pity of it! So great a pain for so slight a cause! All had slipped away from him: home, work, his father, Annice — what was left? Saddest of all, the chance to undo that great hurt had slipped away. The vigorous young body was shaking with sobs. Henry had shed no tears since his father's death. They were few now, wrung out in pain, a strong man's tears for the two people he had loved, both gone beyond his touch.

The tears brought quiet, and the quiet, peace. Slowly, through the pain, there came to him a sense of inner harmonies in jangling things. A gleam of the insight that comes through suffering, the hope worked out through struggle were his. He had done what he thought was right. If he had done less, he would have been less his father's son. Were that hard decision to be made again, would he not decide in the same way? And Annice — Annice, whose accusation had been so cruelly false, to her he could say nothing and could make no excuse. Yet she should be followed still by that encompassing love that had striven, perhaps had failed, for her. There was a sound somewhere as of music, music of an eternal order of things. He rose to his feet and squared his shoulders, the old look, and a new one with it, in his face.

A flag over the fresh sod of a soldier's grave caught his

eye, and it brought back, full and clear, that old call to action. Yes, he had something left, a chance to stand and say again the thing he thought was true. His work was there, beyond the reach of death and change. Henry turned to go, almost content.

Then, looking up, he saw Annice coming toward him, stepping softly between the ranks of the dead. As she neared him, both hands were stretched out, and her face quivered.

"Henry," she pleaded, "I didn't mean it. Forgive me. I know better now."

There was silence. Only the trees rustled with a motion of life among the leaves, and there was a sound in the air of the quick wings of birds.

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